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THE SPHERE

Vol. CLXIII No. 2134 — WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE GRAPHIC — DECEMBER 14 1940

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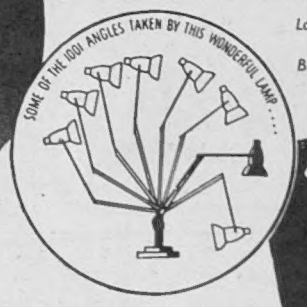

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Volume CLXIII No. 2134

The SPHERE, London, December 14, 1940

THE SPHERE

With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"

The Empire's Illustrated Weekly

London, December 14, 1940

The BRITISH FORCES LAUNCH a MAJOR ATTACK against ITALY'S LIBYAN ARMIES

On Monday morning (December 9) at dawn, the first major operation against the Italian armies on the Libyan-Egyptian frontier was delivered by the British Forces which have been holding them for so many months. General Sir Archibald Wavell, British C.-in-C. in the Middle East, himself gave the first news to the correspondents. Leaning cross-legged against his desk, he said : "Gentlemen, I have asked you here to tell you that our forces began to carry out an engagement against the Italian armies in the Western Desert at dawn this morning" ; he added : "Two hours ago I received word that we had captured an Italian camp." This successful result was the reward of careful secret preparations. Dumps of food and ammunition had been hidden in the sand actually in advance of British lines. No enemy planes came over on the final day of preparation. Our own planes bombed the enemy's aerodromes and positions in rear, while the British forces crept up and completely surprised the Italian advanced camp at Maktila, 15 miles S.E. of Sidi Barani. One thousand prisoners were taken, one general was killed and a second captured. Subsequent advances led to the capture of 4000 native and Italian troops

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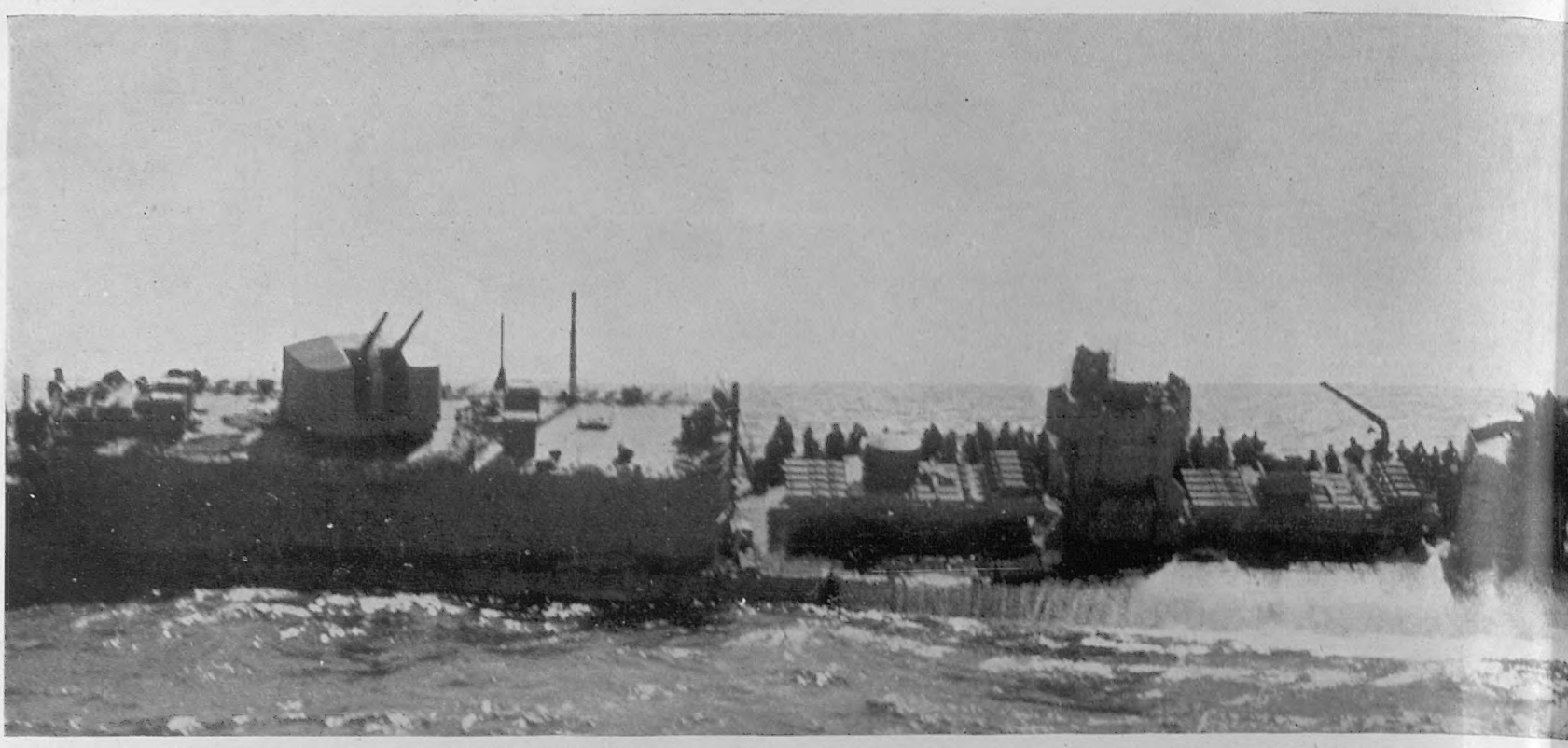


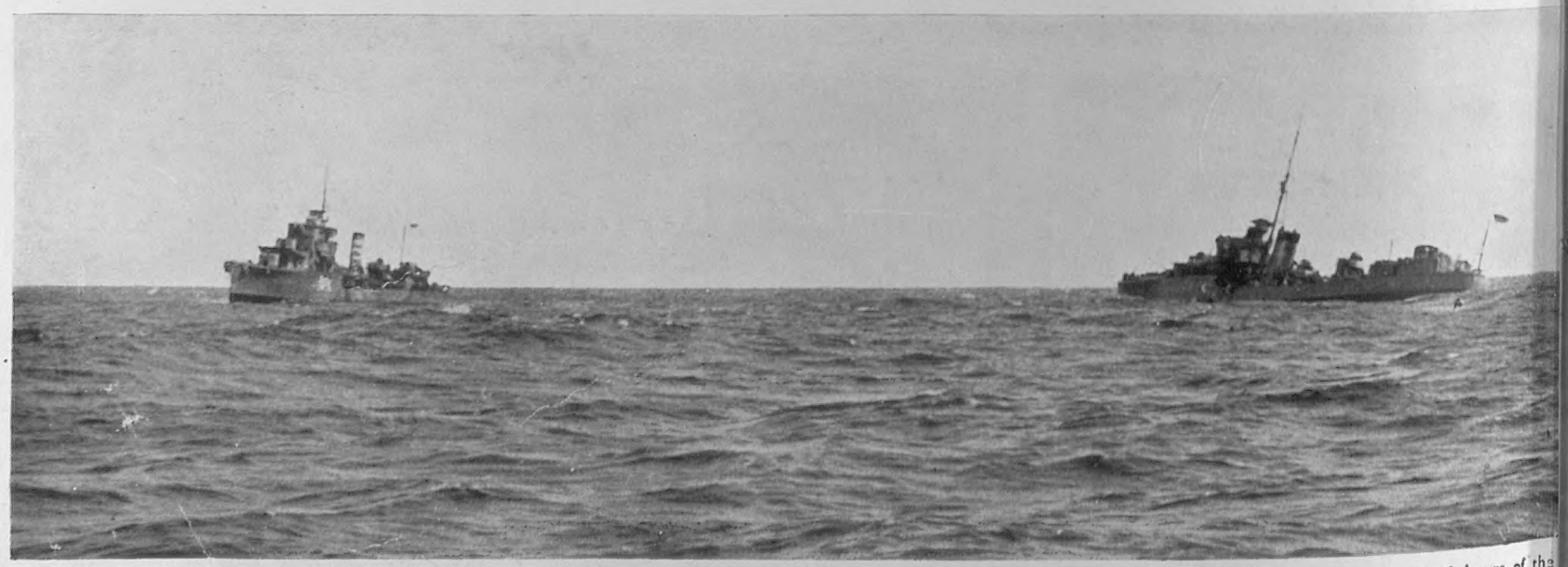
IN MAY LAST THE FLOTILLA LEADER "KELLY" WAS TORPEDOED AND BADLY DAMAGED—BUT SHE WAS NOT SUNK: LISTING BADLY TO STARBOARD, SHE WAS TOWED ACROSS THE NORTH SEA, AND AFTER 91 HOURS SHE ARRIVED AT A REPAIR YARD: This picture was taken just after she was hit

"AS HER LIST HAD INCREASED AND IT SEEMED AS IF SHE MIGHT SINK AT ANY MOMENT, THE CAPTAIN OF THE 'KELLY' DECIDED TO SEND EVERYBODY OUT OF THE SHIP NOT REQUIRED TO FIGHT THE GUNS": The other destroyers had stopped and sent boats to transfer these men, and here a boatload are seen transferring to another vessel.

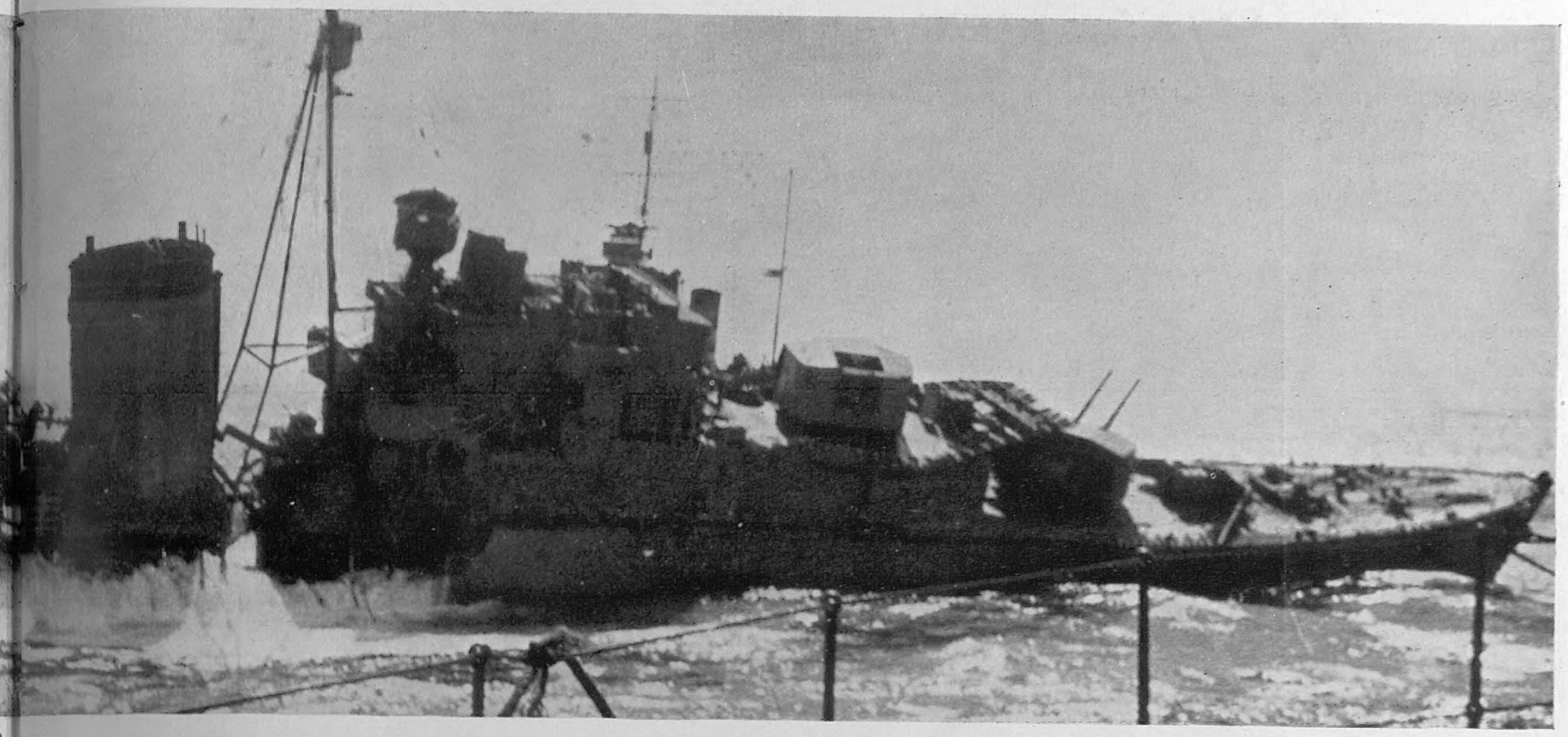
THE RETURN OF THE "KELLY"

The Destroyer that was NOT Sunk

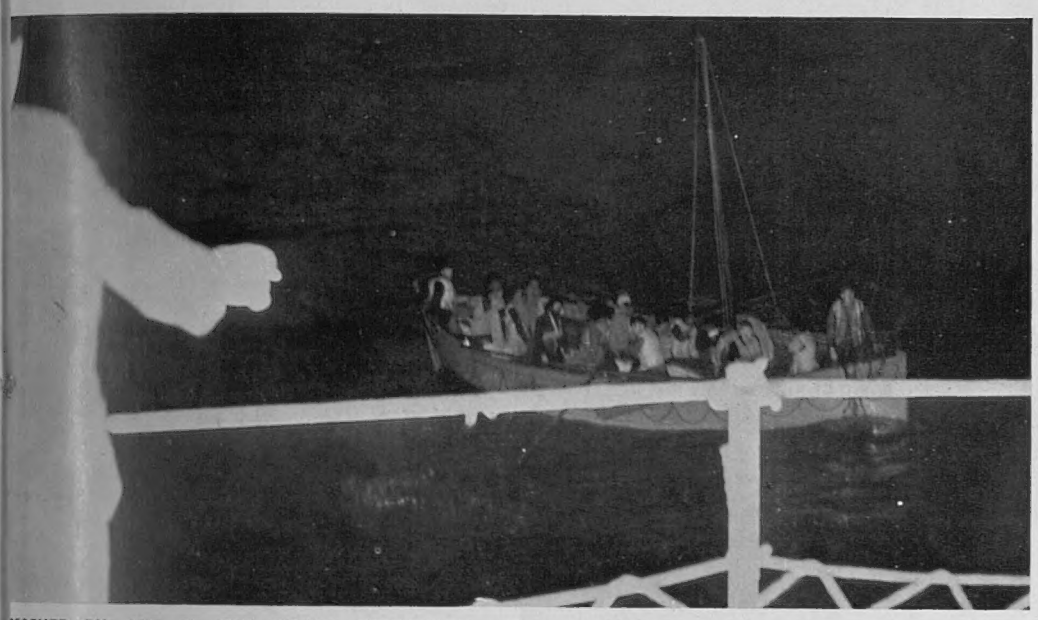
On the evening of a Thursday in May *Kelly* was leading a destroyer flotilla operating against a German minelaying force off the enemy coast. An escorting aircraft having reported a submarine ahead, *Kelly* and a sister destroyer, *Kandahar*, proceeded to hunt her. A further report from the aircraft of having sighted the enemy minelaying force presently decided the Captain of *Kelly* to abandon the hunt and rejoin his flotilla. While overtaking them another destroyer, the *Bulldog*, joined *Kelly* and *Kandahar*. It was now 10.30 p.m. Then came the explosion. The *Kelly* lifted bodily with the force of the detonation, which blew a large hole in her side, extending downwards to the keel. *Bulldog*, who had been some distance astern, presently reappeared, and the smoke having cleared somewhat, sighted *Kelly* lying like a log on the water, down by the bows and with a heavy list to starboard. *Bulldog* took *Kelly* in tow and was heading for home in an incredibly short time. Early next morning *Kandahar* rejoined and the wounded were transferred to her. During this operation, while the two ships were lying alongside each other, German bombers appeared. Repeated bombing attacks were made by the enemy and were beaten off. Saturday wore on, the wind and sea rising steadily. The *Kelly* was labouring with a heavy list, and yawing from side to side almost unmanageably. As her list had increased, the Captain of the *Kelly* decided to send everybody out of the ship not required to fight the guns. The tow had repeatedly parted and further attempts at towing were abandoned until the weather moderated. In the dawn two tugs arrived and the volunteer party returned to *Kelly* and got her in tow. On the Monday afternoon, having been 91 hours in tow or hove to, *Kelly* and her escort arrived at a repair-yard.



"KELLY" IS TAKEN IN TOW BY H.M.S. "BULLDOG" "WITH ASSURED SEAMANSHIP AND WAS HEADING FOR HOME IN AN INCREDIBLY SHORT TIME": Later the remainder of *Kelly's* crew were taken off until the arrival of two tugs, which finally brought the destroyer into port and the repair-yard, after 91 hours of the most intense endeavour, during which time she had been shielded from attack from the air by other destroyers



The Rescue of 60 British Seamen



RESCUED BY ONE OF THE EX-U.S. DESTROYERS : The shipwrecked seamen from the torpedoed British freighter come alongside the destroyer at early dawn after being afloat for thirteen hours. The Bo's'un shouted "Go aft," where willing hands were stretched out to draw them aboard. The shipwrecked crew had released red distress signals and these had been sighted sometime previously by the destroyer's crew

STANDING ON A BOX BELOW THE BRIDGE, THE CAPTAIN OF THE TORPEDOED MERCHANTMAN TAKES THE ROLL-CALL

One of the recently acquired U.S. destroyers, now performing useful service guarding British convoys in the Western Approaches, recently rescued sixty members of the crew of a torpedoed British freighter. These sailors had been afloat in an open boat for thirteen hours before the rescue was effected. The pictures reproduced here were taken as, and after, the wrecked crew came aboard the destroyer, where they were met with blankets, hot drinks and medical attention after their severe experience in icy cold weather which had seriously affected many of the Lascars

THESE LASCAR SURVIVORS ARE COVERED WITH U.S. NAVY BLANKETS : they are seated near the funnels to benefit by the warmth after their 13 hours of exposure in an open boat

THE CREW OF THE MERCHANTMAN BEING HAULED ABOARD :—This task is a great test of seamanship in a heavy swell : one false move and the boat would crash against the destroyer's side. On the other hand, the work must proceed quickly, for while stationary the destroyer is a sitting target for any U-boats in the vicinity

A WAR NEWSLETTER—No. 67

32-34, ST. BRIDE STREET, E.C.4

A POSSIBLE HIT.

—From wishful thinking, good Lord deliver us, but news of the war with Italy at the time of writing is definitely encouraging—hedge it as we will with reservations and temper it with headshakings. The Greeks press on, always cool-headed and never boastful, and town after town of strategic importance has fallen into their hands, with invaluable war material and many prisoners of low morale. By their command of the military road in one of the most important sectors of the Italian zone of aggression they have driven the Fascists into pockets, isolated and lacking inter-communication with what was once a part of the new Italian Empire. In the middle of a tempest, which is rocking his ship of state, the Duce has been swapping his pilots and chief officers. It was no time to leave the wheel or the bridge unmanned for an instant, and the task of his new commanders will be doubly difficult while the Allies use this God-sent opportunity to enlarge the breach. The rifts clearly date within the Fascist rank. It is impossible to suppose that the King, the Crown Prince and Badoglio have endured without spoken disapproval the destruction which Mussolini's amateur and political strategy have brought on the reputation and arms of the Italian Empire. In Africa, in the Dodecanese, in Albania, in Italian naval ports, in the arsenal and workshops of Italy, are a fearful proof of the havoc which the vanity of a dictator, whose brain and body have gone soft, have brought about. The Italian Fleet is half submerged and wholly Fascist. Italian war effort is considerably crippled, her trade at a standstill, units are mewed up in the desert, her air fleet is daily revealing an unexpected inferiority in material and morale, while the initiative has been wrested from her armies in every sector of the African front. In the patrol actions and the raids of the past months we have taken heavy toll of her vital stores and damaged the morale of her troops, and now that expediency has dictated the need for a more general engagement, the first stage has gone well for British arms.

THE SALVATION ARMY CAPTAIN IN THE SOLDIERS' CLUB: Inhabitants of the Durham mining town of Hetton-le-Hole frequently hear, as they pass along a certain street, a lovely soprano voice which is famed throughout the North East. Then male voices join in and complete the hymn singing. The singer is Captain Gladys Howard, of the Salvation Army, and the singing comes from the Victory Club. Every Saturday night Captain Howard turns up at the Club to sell the "War Cry," and renders her hymns whilst she sells her papers; above she is seen during one of these self-imposed hymn recitals

THE SWIFT TRANSFORMATION.

—Graziani missed the bus, as Hitler missed it in June and July. We were given a breathing space in which to make good our weaknesses in the African zone, and we used that opportunity to the full. To-day we can face the worst that Italy can send against us, with quiet confidence, and with the means which we never dreamed we should obtain of destroying the vital lines of communication between Italy's mainland and her African army. We have done some wishful thinking in the past autumn concerning blows which we might aim at the traitorous sleeping partner of the Axis gang. Our rosiest dreams did not envisage so swift or vast a retribution and transformation which to-day have overtaken Mussolini's Empire. His own dilemma is clear. Fascist Italy has lost cohesion, its easily gained reputation is tarnished and dimmed; the Duce, if he can take back, can only do so by admitting his own incompetence and the rottenness of his war machine, and by selling his own and his nation's soul into a deeper slavery of a rival whom he has despised while he feared, and to a race by nature and tradition antipathetic to the Italians. We are not such fools as to halloa this December, 1940. We are not unconscious of the darkness and immensity of the wood that closes us in. But it is reasonable to pass a whisper of hope and cheer from man to man, and even to claim to see a glimmer of light in the darkness ahead. The power of the dictators is not unbreakable, their wisdom not omnipotent, and all over Europe men and slaves are pulling at their chains and shaking their fetters in the faces of their oppressors. There are grounds for reconsidered optimism.

U.S. AND US.

—The help which America is giving us is vital and immense. The good will of the majority of her generous, sympathetic people means to us in this crisis of our fate not much less than their material aid. In this war there can be no victory without a moral support ever increasing and more loudly voiced. I understand how important it is that no impatience should affect our understanding of American policy and American sympathy. A democracy ourselves at war, we are out to understand and, indeed, remember, how a democracy still at peace works and moves. Patience and gratitude must be our watchwords. Few have believed that anything short of everything (and that now) can win the victory which alone can save America from the fate of small European nations once free. We know what war is; we can still remember to what length we were prepared to go to keep out of it. Facts brought us in, and facts alone will increase the ranks of the crusaders. Facts, fairly and squarely approached, alone can decide the full extent and the time of America's contribution to the saving of civilisation.

THE OLD FILES AND CUTTINGS.

—A few people, I suppose, have found the time, in the constant labour of war, to keep books of cuttings and files of newspapers. It is a tragic collection, for it tells us all too much about the myopia of mankind and the frailty of the testimony and prophecy of experts and men-in-the-know. The facts and plums of history are covered with such pie-crust; but I wonder if ever before in a world crisis so many prophecies have gone west, so much light proved will-o'-the-wisp. I spent an hour turning back the pages, not of a neatly gummed cuttings book, but of stray issues of the "dailies" not yet scrapped, and extending from January to September 1940. There was no fun in it. It was just pure tragedy. Not an issue but contained a confident prediction, a comforting assurance, an irrefutable fact. Where are they now? The things the experts said about Russia and her intentions; of the issue in Finland; of the prospects of the invasion of the Low Countries and Scandinavia; of the solid certainty of French resistance alongside Britain. These pronouncements are far too tragic to justify pillorying by quotation. I think perhaps some of those made by neutral observers, military, economic, political and journalistic, afford the lightest literature of the war in this tragic sphere. How many ten-day groups have gone over our heads since the first pundit declared in July that if Britain could hold out ten days longer, the battle of Britain and freedom was won? Perhaps it was so; if so, why are they saying it still? In the first week of August, such experts as Lord Lothian and Mr. Noel Coward declared that the invasion of Britain must come within a week, or Hitler would take a crippling knock to his prestige. Then there appeared some confident pronouncements on the crippling of German air power and its effect on the air bombardment of Britain. And the war goes on. The talkers talk and the workers work and the fighters fight. Let this sad experience of turning back the files leave no sadness or depression. Let it serve to inculcate the lesson that war is like this. All that matters to you or me is to hammer, hammer on with our little bit—and one day the entire structure will stand complete.

PARALLELS.

—A friend, whose mind is stored with historical and political facts and parallels, has drawn my attention to certain interesting points. The tragic action at Oran was the first naval action between Britain and France since Trafalgar—135 years ago. Britain has not had as Premier an ex-regular soldier since the Duke of Wellington, 1830 (or, if you count the interregnum while Peel was coming home from Italy to take the office, 1834). I am not quite certain if the 14th Earl of Derby (P.M., 1858) ever held for a time a commission in the Guards. I rather believe not. I don't think there is any other claimant between Wellington and Mr. Churchill. In any case, Lord Derby's service as a regular (if he had any) would only have been at home in the fashionable process of the education of the *jeunesse d'orée* at that period.

SHALL WE ECHO IT ONE DAY?

—Both the brothers Kingsley afford excellent escape literature in these days, as I have often suggested. A correspondent who has been re-reading Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* sends me this extract that had reference to the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and points out its aptness and its comfort in our present Armageddon. All who read it will agree with him. One day—sooner or later—we shall surely be in a position to choose words in the same sense and we could hardly find words more fitting to the state of mind in which it is to be hoped we shall acknowledge our thankfulness and properly ascribe our gratitude where it will belong. We need but add one more despotism to the list of those others which have from the vanity and lusts of a few set the world in flames and torments, and perished and passed into the history of things infamous. "Yes, it is over; and the great Armada is vanquished. It is lulled for a while, the everlasting war which is in heaven, the battle . . . of the children of light and of darkness, of Michael and his angels against Satan and his friends; the battle which slowly and seldom, once in the course of many centuries, culminates and ripens into a day of judgment, and becomes palpable and incarnate; no longer a mere spiritual fight, but one of flesh and blood, wherein simple men may choose their sides without mistake, and help God's cause not merely with prayer and pen, but with sharp shot and cold steel. A day of judgment has come, which has divided the light from the darkness, and the sheep from the goats, and tried each man's work by the fire; and, behold, the devil's work, like its maker, is proved to have been, as always, a lie and a sham, and a windy boast, a bladder which collapses at the merest pin-prick. Byzantine empires, Spanish Armadas, triple-crowned Papacies, Russian Despotisms, this is the way of them, and will be to the end of the world. One brave blow at the big bullying phantom, and it vanishes in sulphur stench; while the children of Israel, as of old, see the Egyptians dead on the seashore—they scarce know how, save that God has done it—and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

IF YOU WILL, YOU CAN.

—I have been studying the results of the W.I. campaign in our rural centre last summer to preserve local fruit. The area concerned covered a group of small villages centred round one larger village in a sparsely-populated and very rural area; 370 people brought in fruits of various kinds, ranging in weight from 100 to 2 lbs. The cannery has made a handsome profit. It charged 5½d. a can, payable on removal, a sum calculated to cover cost of can, sugar, labour and gas, rent, insurance, apparatus and postage. Just under 12,000 cans were sealed down, with the use of 3 lb. of sugar per can. It was done at a cost of £275, of which £157 for sugar was the largest item. The chief fruits preserved were currants, raspberries, gooseberries, tomatoes, pears, blackberries, with pride of place to plums of all types. If this has been (and can be) canned in a small pin-point on the map of rural England, it is a heartening fact. You have only to realise the extent to which this small section of a single county has put itself beyond the requirements of imported fruits in cans and helped towards making England more nearly self-supporting; and to realise also the admirable result of the movement in preventing waste of soft fruits—a lamentable crime in pre-war days.

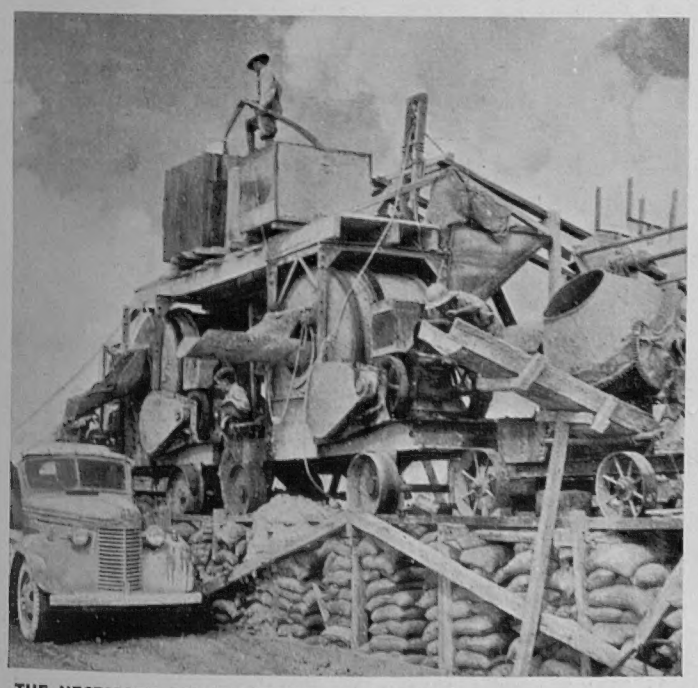
THE OLD STAGER

A MAJOR BRITISH ATTACK ON GRAZIANI'S ARMIES IN LIBYA BEGINS

BRITISH TROOPS IN ACTION WITH AN ANTI-TANK GUN AGAINST THE ITALIAN ADVANCED POSTS ON THE LIBYAN FRONTIER

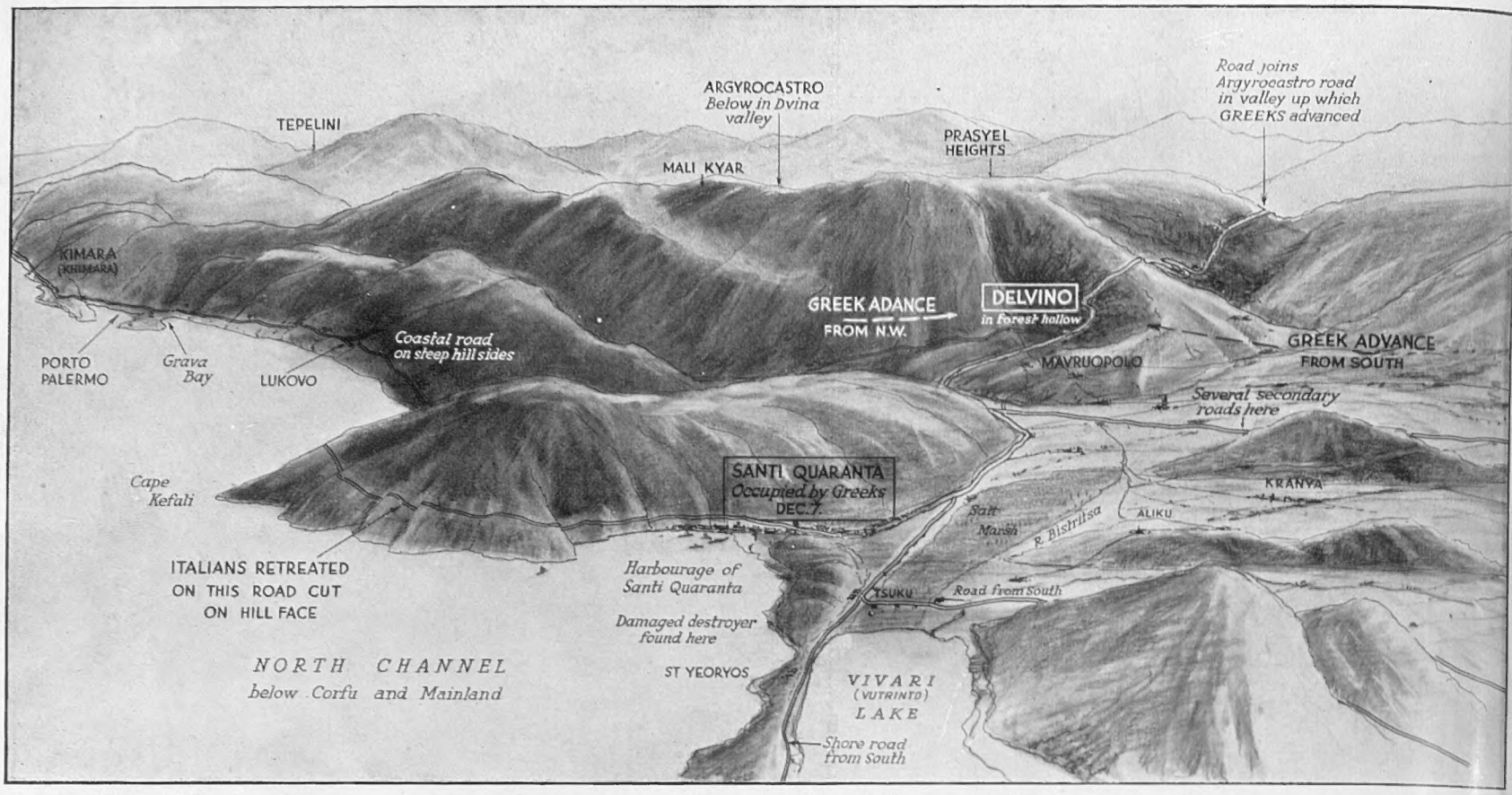
Fortunately the approaches to the Italian outlying positions gave adequate concealment to the British forces which crept forward on the night of December 8-9 and surprised the Italian outpost, who sprang to their arms, but too late to stop the British onrush. For three months the Italian advanced camp 15 miles to the S.E. of Sidi Barrani had been holding its first position on the elevated plateau which ends in the Scarp overlooking Sollum and Sidi Barrani. This scarp is illustrated on page 346 of this issue

The attack against the Italian positions involved an advance along the Scarp which is now a well-known feature of the fighting area. Possession of the Scarp would command what is known as the "Beach" on which the Italian Sidi Barrani forces have been encamped. Later news indicated that the British advance on the extreme right had reached a position close to the shore between Sidi Barrani and Buk Buk, a wedge evidently having been driven between Italian and Native troops holding a position at Sidi Barrani. There took place at the same time a wide encircling movement the results of which were developing. The Air Force and the Navy assisted brilliantly. This picture shows one of the Indian contingent handling an anti-tank rifle in such cover as could be gained in this patch of the desert

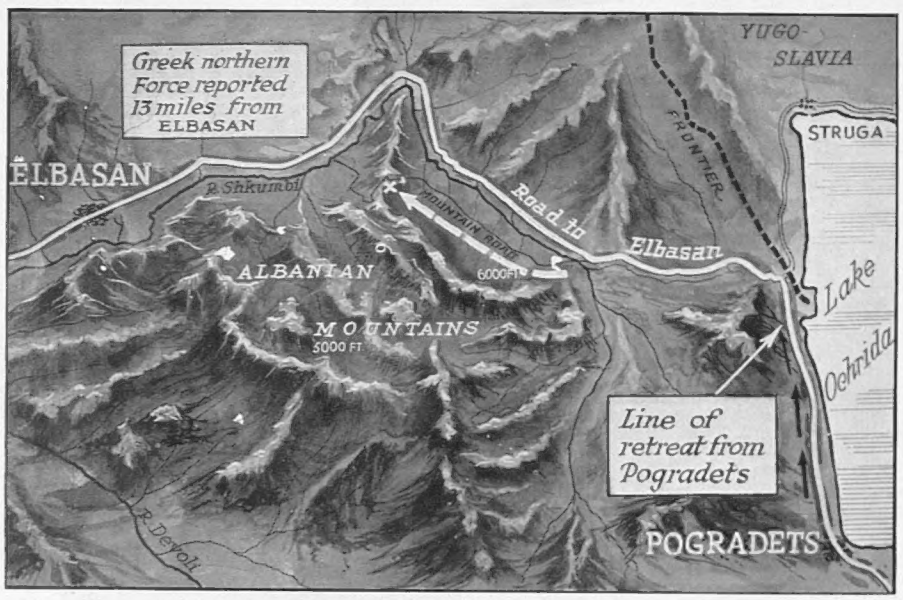


THE NECESSARY REINFORCEMENT OF CONCRETE: Although desert warfare is a question of the utmost mobility, the necessary amount of defence work against counter-attack has not been neglected and in the silence of the desert this complex concrete-mixer makes a goodly noise. The enemy's mobile units would meet with some surprises

THE R.A.F. TOOK PART IN THE MAJOR OFFENSIVE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK: The coastal positions, aerodromes and rearward bases of the two Italian armies were bombed effectively while the British infantry was dropping silently on to the sand from lorries and armoured cars and crawling forward to the zero-hour positions. In the above view a number of R.A.F. ground units were being inspected in the Western Desert



THE ITALIAN RETREAT ALONG THE COAST FROM SANTI QUARANTA: Santi Quaranta lies at the foot of a hill mass detached from the surrounding mountain masses; the highest point is about 1,588 ft. The advancing Greek forces came up from the south (on the right-hand side of above view) and compelled the Italian forces to retreat from the port. There are two lesser roads out of the town: one behind the bluff and another in front, cut along the surface of the hillsides. Both converge at Lukovo and pass on to Grava Bay and Palermo Harbour. A little farther the troops will pass by Himara (or Khimara) one of the spectacular spots in Albania. The approaches by which Delvino was practically surrounded by Greek forces are shown with greater detail than in previous maps. Delvino occupies a wooded hollow under the shadow of the high range forming the western side of the Argyrocastro valley. Retreat from Delvino must have meant a descent to the shore roads already mentioned or by way of another country road following the contours of the Malyi Kyar



THE ROAD TO ELBASAN LIES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE YUGOSLAVIAN FRONTIER: The advancing Greek forces were during the week-end pressing up the lakeside road shown in the above view. They were also clearing out a number of villages on the higher ground to the west of the lake where pockets of Italian troops appear to have been still holding out. Some of the villages are reported to have been heavily fortified. Away from the one motor road there are the old mountain tracks which seam the country. The mountains in the neighbourhood rise to 5,000 and 6,000 ft. Rain and mist have been hampering movements in this district

A KEY MAP OF THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FIGHTING AREAS: The chief interest here centres on the two roads leading to Tepelini; one goes by Premeti and Klisura and the other by Argyrocastro. The two points on the River Viose (or Viosa or Voyosa) are important tactically but are small compared with Argyrocastro. Unless the Italians on the Premeti road retire to Berat, there promises to be a congestion of traffic at Tepelini bridge, where the two roads join. If retreat is the order of the day, the Italian troops would make for Valona via Vajza where there is open country and a port

THE TOWN AND PORT OF SANTI QUARANTA, AS SEEN FROM THE ROADSTEAD

The town of the Forty Saints (this is what its name signifies) is a small but neatly-built place, with quays, but no great harbour works. There is a local aerodrome somewhere on the flat ground behind the town to the south-east. The hills here have a smooth, down-like character, and are under 2,000 ft. in height. From their slopes one can look across the strait to Corfu's rocky shores. A damaged Italian destroyer and a wrecked schooner were discovered here by the advancing Greek troops, proof of the good work done by the R.A.F. in hindering the Italian forces from using freely their ports of supply

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THE BRETON THORN

An Intimate and Detailed Account of the Region from Which the Germans are now Operating Against Britain by Sea and by Air

By FERDINAND TUOHY

THERE is something peculiarly distressing in the way Brittany has come to be so dread a thorn in our side—for not only does the major menace of the moment issue from Lorient U-boat base, but south-west England is regularly and severely bombed from Breton airfields such as Dinan, St. Brieuc, Lannion and Brest, while any invasion of Eire would have Brittany as its principal jumping-off point; and the same goes for Cornwall and Devon. In fact, here is the sector of France which threatens us most after Calais-Boulogne, maybe before it.

Distressing, I find it, because of the many ties that linked Gaelic Britain to the Bretons and which probably rendered Brittany, all in all, the best-disposed of French provinces towards us. Many times did I hear Bretons say they felt they belonged as much to the northern side of the Channel as to the southern, a remark prompted by their propinquity to brother Celts in "Cornouailles," in Wales and Ireland. And we have ample testimony that this friendliness persists. Earlier tidings told how Bretons hid and helped British and Poles when these were trying to escape in July. More recent reports testify that the passage of the R.A.F. is a signal for joy and that its exploits are saluted as inevitable when they bring damage and loss to Breton ports.

If there is hostility to us in the big ports, notably in naval circles, whose retired element congregates more thickly than anywhere outside Toulon, the direction of Breton sympathies as a whole is not in doubt. All the more, therefore, does one regret the Allies having yielded the whole of Brittany, as they did.

When the Somme and Oise fronts were pierced in June an effort was made to persuade Weygand to take measures to defend at least the ultimate portion, Finisterre. We could have supported a detached and reconstructed French force with landings at various points forthwith and subsequently (it was about the time we landed at Cherbourg and hopped away again). It was hoped that the fact that Weygand (like Foch) had made his home near Morlaix, and had married a Breton lady, might help. Moreover, the new Commander-in-Chief shared Breton conservatism and catholicism.

A defensive position of less than seventy miles, drawn roughly from St. Brieuc across to Auray, would have sufficed to keep in Allied hands Brest and Lorient and several important airfields. This line, which we might at least have made an attempt to hold without risking any greater disaster than we challenged elsewhere, would have run through country hard to take by mechanised assault on account of its vast forests, its rivers and canals, deep valleys, and heights that culminate to the northward, in the "Mountains of Ménéz" whose highest point may be only 1,115 feet, yet a Mt. Cassel dominates French Flanders from half as high. Its pivotal centres would have been Loudéac and Pontivy, which Napoleon conceived as a strongpoint and renamed Napoléonville.

How near we came to realising this line of resistance is evidenced by the historical fact that at Tours on June 13 Paul Reynaud put before the Council of Ministers and General Staff two alternatives: Bordeaux, with North Africa in the background as a further retreating ground, and Brittany, with a choice of Britain or the United States as refuge should the German onrush prove irresistible. As that day decided, Brittany and the Bretons escaped war's devastating descent, but Britain and Free France lost the chance of clinging to an invaluable continental bridgehead, and were to become saddled with such bad dreams as Lorient.

This naval fortress and port, sixty miles below Brest, is seldom now out of the Air Ministry communiqués. "A very heavy raid was carried out by squadrons of the Coastal Command on the U-boat base at Lorient." As a result of the latest, at this writing, the Germans say there were 345 civilian casualties and that they may order the evacuation of the port.

Lorient has grown to be the "Bruges" of this war, an infinitely menacing U-boat nest which must somehow be smoked out. The ravages exerted by Bruges were not curbed until the Zeebrugge bottling-up of St. George's Day 1918. By what new combination or audacity can we hope to restrict the grievous losses being suffered by our shipping in the Atlantic and western approaches, and which the Royal Navy associates primarily with Lorient?

Not a doubt but that the chief reason the Nazis hared across north-western France to the Atlantic seaboard was to gain possession of Brest and Lorient, which they succeeded in accomplishing with a handful of motorized personnel (twenty men took Brest), a terrific warning air-raid on the station at Rennes, the capital, and copious loud-speaker "peace-and-deliverance-from-the-English" propaganda disseminated through a populace aghast.

The guide book tells you that Lorient is a dull modern town of 45,000 inhabitants. Hammered by the R.A.F., its normal population slashed by the heavy coastal cut ordained by the Nazis, those who remain, grieving for thousands of sons, brothers, husbands and fathers absent *sine die* with the fleet or in German prison camps, Lorient is no place to-day, but it was never dull. No French port can be that if one quicken to the human pageant which can compensate for an absence of antiquities. L'Orient, so named by its founders, the French East India Company, is only three hundred years old and for Brittany looks very new and utilitarian, but there used to be plenty of picturesque life on its Place Alsace-Lorraine and along its shaded Cours de la Bove.

The place is ideally contrived for the rôle the Nazis cast for it. Lying four miles inland and separated from the roadstead by a channel mostly deep, narrow and winding, Lorient, with its telescoping Port Louis, abounds in canals, creeks and "basins" in which submarines can lie up or hide. The town stands on the estuary of the Rivers Blavet and Scorff, at whose confluence is the new "War Port" or naval dockyard and arsenal. The last I saw of it, three months before the war, Lorient echoed to universal hammering. The 35,000-ton battleship *Jean Bart* was being completed there, and numerous lighter warships.

Now the Admiral looks at it all from Vichy, where (I hear through Lisbon) "Jean François is in a growing dilemma. Can he bring himself to sink his sentiments as outraged sailor and emerge solely as patriot? He still hates you (Britain), but can't help noticing the change in public opinion. And does he like being lumped together with Peter (Laval)!" As this was written some while before the recent transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean, one can only hope that the very important Darlan has been as impressed as we surmise the wandering Weygand to have been in North Africa. We have not paid enough attention to Darlan, who continues to exercise a stronger hold on the French than others never out of the headlines.

Brittany's invasion threat is self-evident. There are a round dozen ports which enemy naval forces and the Luftwaffe must be turning to account: St. Malo, St. Brieuc, Paimpol, Roscoff, Brest, Camaret, Douarnenez, Concarneau, Lorient, Vannes' "inland sea," Quiberon-Belle Île, and St. Nazaire, and from most of them invasion contraptions and their escorts might be directed on an Eire to all intents and purposes undefended.

No doubt the Royal Navy would love this to supervene, a Nazi host attempting to cross three hundred miles, for if the Germans managed to land a man with or without our permission *we* should be entitled to land for the protection of Cobh (Queenstown) and Berehaven. Yet the fact remains that the Navy has meanwhile to sustain a perpetual, craft-absorbing watch on most of the Breton coast at a time when every light vessel is bitterly needed for protective work elsewhere. Lord Louis Mountbatten's exploits formed part of this watch.

More likely, though, would the Breton thorn take the shape of airborne invading troops, and besides her airfields Brittany is rich in natural anchorages—like the estuary of the Odet, leading up to Quimper, and the Morbihan Sea further South.

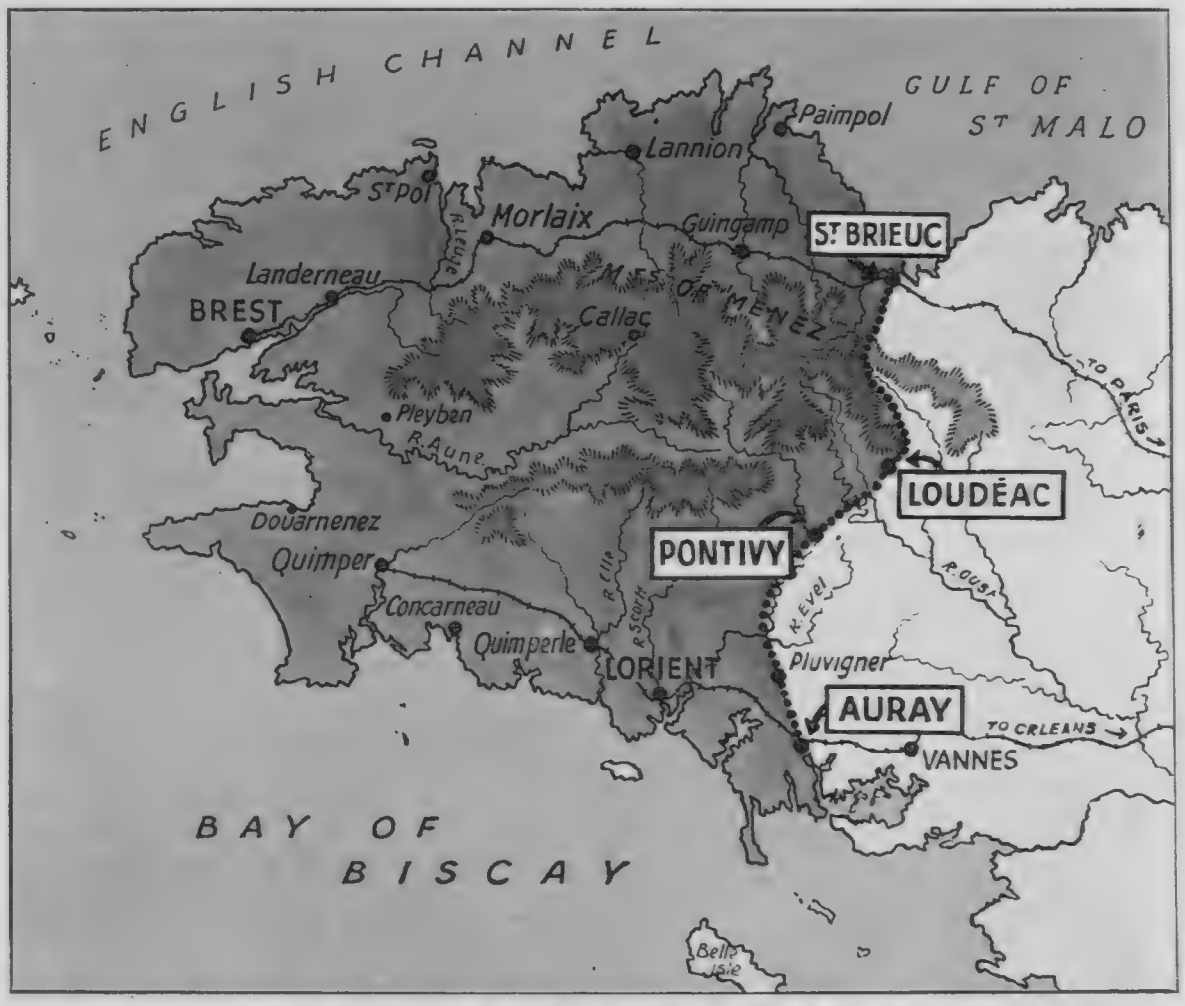
Is there anything else to be done about Brittany besides R.A.F. hammering and ceaseless naval watch in hope of a pounce?

Perhaps, however, it is best to resist investigating recent talk concerning the Army being ready in 1941 for dashes abroad. Only is it meet to recall that our modern military record for Brittany is confined to three failures: Admiral Berkeley before Brest in 1694, General Sinclair's 7,000 expeditionary force to Lorient in 1746, and the Quiberon débâcle of 1795 shepherded by Commodore Warren. . . .

What one does feel at this stage is that we might stand to gain by directing at Brittany a specially prepared "political warfare" drive—not the stilted "confetti" the R.A.F. had to carry to Germany last winter but "contact-material," broadcast, in printed form, or circulated secretly, aimed clean at the Bretons and their own future; thus paving the way for any local turn to the war that might lie ahead.

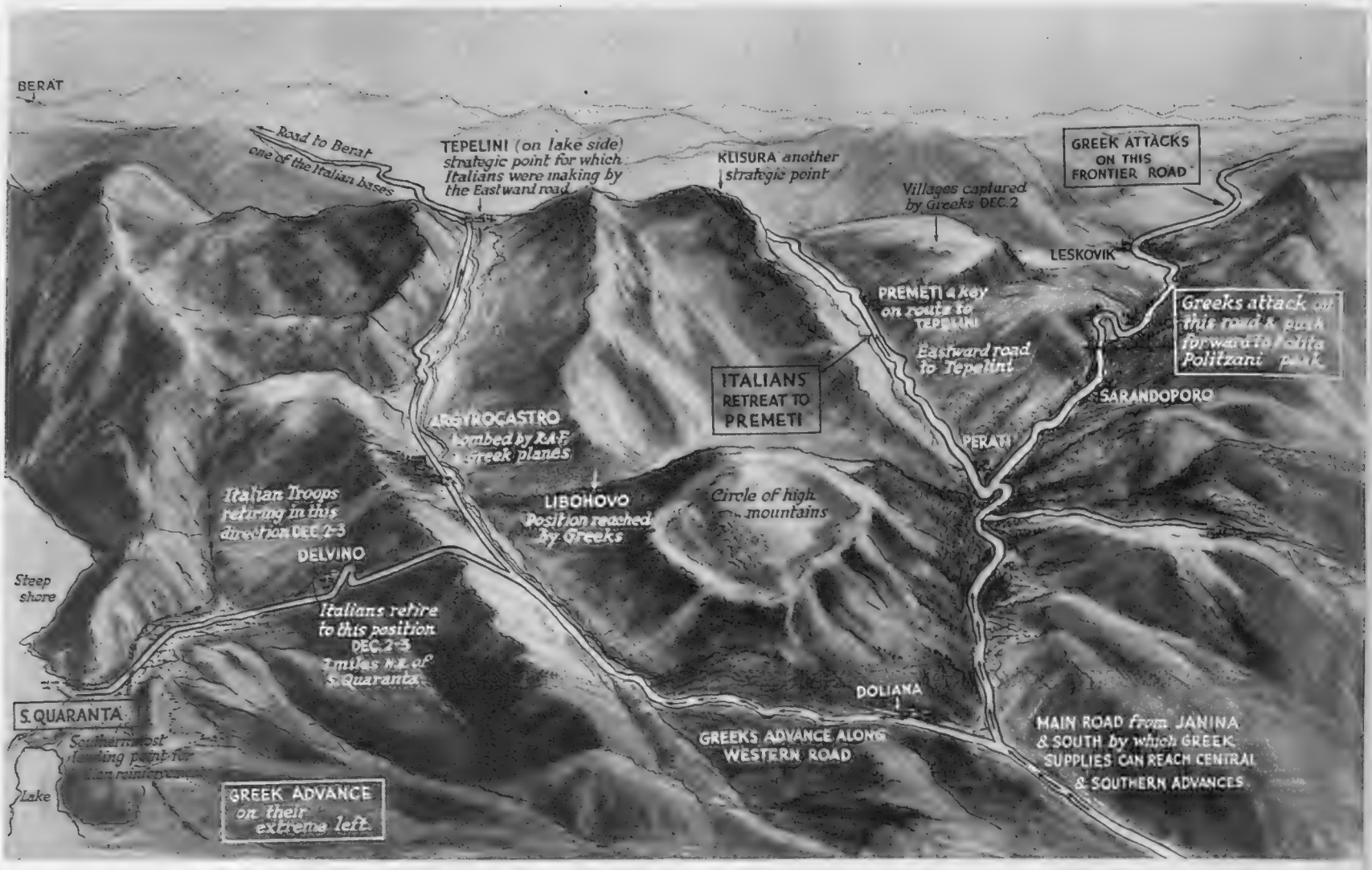
The attitude of the Bretons has become a frigid ignoring, try as the intruder will to be agreeable. He who so wants to be friendly, is left to nibble his chocolate and eat his cream cakes—alone. He is fortunate if a piece of garbage doesn't "accidentally" fall near, or a skilfully thrown stone.

The Bretons are combative, cunning, no fools, and friendly to us. We should play on that.



THE BRITTANY WHICH THE GERMANS HAVE MADE INTO A THORN IN THE SIDE OF BRITAIN

During the German advance into France, had a defensive line been drawn up across the area shown here, it is probable that there would have been quite a different story to tell to-day. To gauge the importance to the enemy of this region, one has only to notice the frequency with which such names as Lannion, Brest, St. Pol and Lorient come into R.A.F. communiqués. "A defensive position of less than seventy miles drawn roughly from St. Brieuc across to Auray would have sufficed to keep in Allied hands Brest and Lorient and several important airfields," declares Mr. Tuohy. "This line, which we might at least have made an attempt to hold without risking any greater disaster than we challenged elsewhere, would have run through country hard to take by mechanized assault on account of its vast forests, its rivers and canals, deep valleys, and heights that culminate to the northward in the 'Mountains of Ménéz,' whose highest point may be only 1115 ft.—yet a Mont Cassel dominates French Flanders from half as high. Its pivotal centres would have been Loudéac and Pontivy, which Napoleon conceived as a strong point and renamed Napoléonville"



THE ITALIAN LINES OF RETREAT IN THE SOUTHERN SECTOR BEFORE THE CAPTURE OF ARGYROCASTRO AND BEFORE SANTI QUARANTA WAS CUT OFF AS SUPPLY BASE

VALONA, SOUTHERN ITALIAN BASE, HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY BOMBED : Valona, or Avlona, was at the opening of the campaign a busy supply port, but during recent weeks it has been heavily bombed by the R.A.F., much oil fuel being destroyed in the raids.

THE CASUAL ADVANCE OF THE FIRST ITALIAN TROOPS INTO ALBANIA : The frontier guards have recorded that on the opening day of the campaign Italian mounted troops came strolling up from the valleys, smoking cigarettes and leading their horses, as if they were engaged on some free-and-easy military exercise. The second force on the following day advanced in the same way, as if no war were on. The Greeks rapidly undeceived them

With the fall of Koritza into the hands of the Greek troops on November 22, there ensued a period of general and persistent advance in all three sectors of the front. The fighting was classified into northern, central, and southern, but with any big advance in the northern area it was realised that this treatment of the war news might have to be altered. The special relief maps given here show the main areas where advances were of a definite and striking character; they record the operations during the week December 2-7. The larger map shows how the Greeks had penetrated into part of the central area in the district where one of the main motor roads runs parallel with the frontier. By October 26-27 Ersek had been captured and passed. Italian troops were moving rapidly backwards on the Premeti road to Tepeleni, the spot where Ali Pasha had his fortress palace. For the sake of clarity, the turns and twists on this road and other ways shown in the two relief maps have been smoothed out to a certain extent, but the main deviations from the straight are indicated. A little to the south, the Greeks were endeavouring to advance along the lower road, which also converges on Tepelini by way of Argyrocastro.

Another and still more stimulating thrust brought the Greeks probably across the mountains and not on the main roads, to a point overlooking Argyrocastro. Labokova is indicated on a hillside to the east of the road. Further south, the Greeks advanced toward Santi Quaranta and threatened Delvino in a way which led to its ultimate capture; the position of this is indicated on the road which climbs up from the coast and, crossing the intervening range, drops into the Argyrocastro-Tepelini road. Villages in this district were reported to have been occupied by the Italians.

In the second relief map the area above Koritza is shown extending northwards to the district level with the upper end of Lake Ochrida and the latitude of Elbasan. In the foreground is the district of Lake Malik and the road to Pogradets. Here great quantities of loot have been garnered in by the Greeks. The fighting here appears to have been intense, and uncertainty on the part of the Italians as to which line of retreat was best seems to be evidenced. Bodies of enemy soldiers have got into positions on the hill-slopes from which they would probably find no exit when the Greeks caught up with them.

THE VERY MODERN AND THE HISTORIC KORITZA : It took the Greeks about a fortnight after the first advance of the Italians in the back. The Greeks entered the town on to the Unknown Soldier; it was

The LINES of RETREAT of the ITALIAN ARMY in ALBANIA

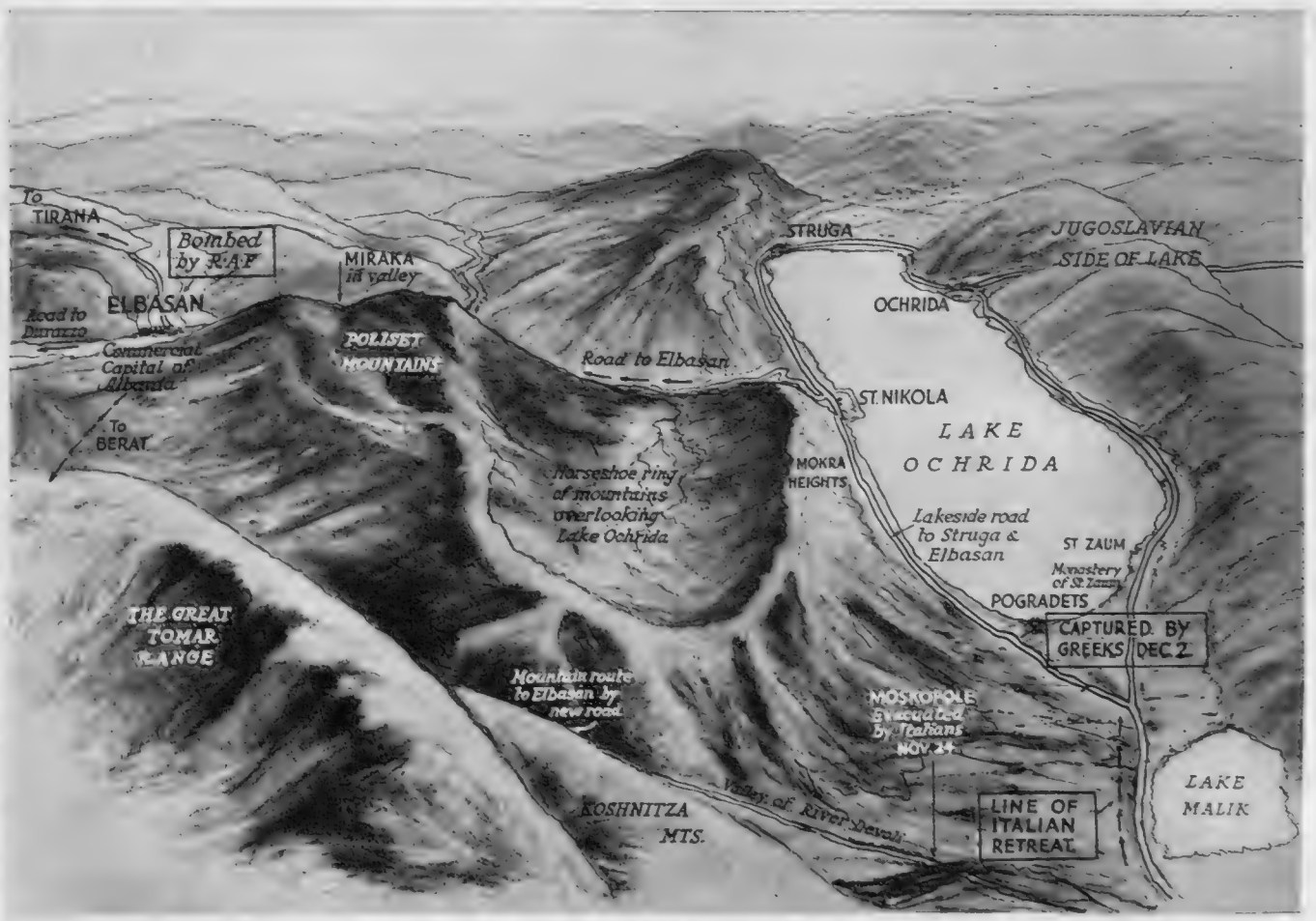
The Santi Quaranta Section and the Koritza Area Shown in Diagram-Drawings Specially made for "The Sphere"

TIRANA, THE ALBANIAN CAPITAL MODERNISED BY KING ZOG, MAY FIGURE IN AN ITALIAN DEFENCE LINE

If the Italians could re-form on an internal line, it was considered last week, Tirana might form the head of a line running southward dividing Albania into halves, one western and one eastern. It was indeed a strange change last week from the first prophecies of the military pundits, who foresaw the occupation of Janina and Salonika and the necessity of blowing up the Corinth Canal. There was, at the time of writing, no evidence that the Italian Army command had taken the smallest precautions in case of retreat—not a vestige of a Torres Vedres line has been discovered. Any retreat through Elbasan would lead to Tirana as a way out. In the above view a main motor road is seen proceeding from the south-east towards the city and its modern section, built by King Zog some years before his flight. Beyond is the River Rushka and the road to Durazzo. Both proceed to the westwards, as shown here. There are several other lesser roads, some fit for wheeled traffic and others fit only for mules or horses leading northwards from the city, but that could lead into the mountains of north Albania. It would appear as if Tirana must be part of a final defence, if, in fact, the Italians intend to make such a defence. An unaided Italy would be faced by the alternative of a general retreat through Durazzo, if weather conditions allow the Greek Army to push on with its forward movement. With any heart in the Italian forces, it would seem that Tirana could be defended behind its neighbouring hills and rivers long enough to ensure a retreat by sea; but this, of course, presupposes that Italy is prepared to abandon a large portion of Albania

TOUCH IN CLOSE PROXIMITY IN

flight to close round the town of Koritza, northernmost sector had been thrown November 22. The statue in this view is designed by an Albanian sculptor



THE ITALIAN FLIGHT FROM POGRADETS, AND THE MALIK AREA

The area shown in relief in the above view covers the district in which the chief rout of the Italian Army has taken place. The enemy forces have streamed up the road from Koritza to Pogradets, strewing impedimenta of all kinds along the motor highway which skirts Lake Ochrida. The pursuit last week was being continued along this lakeside road. This road follows the level shore of the lake and turns suddenly westwards when half-way up the western shore. The road also is not arduous until the point of the actual turn, near the Jugoslavian frontier, a tempting proximity for downhearted troops! The enemy forces returning up the river valley route past Moskopole probably encountered much more difficult conditions. The road plunges through a great river valley between high hills and has many hairpin turns. If it is commanded from above, passage for troops would be impossible. Enemy troops which turned into the Kamia mountain district, just to the south of the big horse-shoe massif shown above, were considered to be in a district hopeless for continued defence. In the Lake Malik district great quantities of abandoned munitions have been collected by the Greeks. The Jugoslavian frontier line cuts across part of Lake Ochrida up to the projection on its western side

THE RELEASE TO BRITAIN OF THE NEW UNITED STATES BILLION-CANDLE-POWER "FLASH-BOMB"

The U.S. Army Air Corps have just released their new and hitherto secret magnesium "flash-bomb" for use by the R.A.F. This billion-candle-power bomb has the very important effect of rendering risky daylight reconnaissance flights over heavily defended enemy country unnecessary. Exploded from a great height, the "bomb" has an effect like that of a photographic flash-bulb: it illuminates an area of five miles and permits the aerial camera to take pictures of damage, etc. The flash from the bomb acts on the photo-electric cell in the plane and trips the camera shutter, so that the picture is taken automatically. The view above shows an un-retouched photograph taken from a height of 5,000 ft.—and taken by night. The clarity of the detail will readily be observed! *On the left* are Major George W. Goddard (on left), U.S. Army observer, with Lieut. Marcus Cooper, who piloted the plane when the bomb was tested. The "billion candle-power" is contained within the canister held by the two officers

AIR COMMENTARY BY C. G. GREY
(Founder of "The Aeroplane")

THE AGE OF MIRACLES IS WITH US

But we Have still got to Work Hard on Our Own, as Well!

ONE of the joys of my youth was the story of the priest (never mind his denomination) who was trying to explain to an Irish bricklayer the nature of a miracle. Said he: "Now, Pat, supposing in your work you were carrying a hod of bricks up a ladder and at the second storey of the house you fell off on to the pavement" (sidewalk, in America) "and didn't hurt yourself. What would you call that?"

"Well, your Riverence, I 'd say that was a quare thing," said Pat.

"Perhaps you 're right," said the priest. "But suppose the same thing happened the next day. What would you say?"

"I 'd say that was a great co-in-cy-dence," said Pat.

"Well!" said the priest patiently. "And suppose it happened again on the third day. What would you call that?"

"Begad, your Riverence," said Pat, "I'd call it a damn silly habit."

The age of miracles is not past. It is very much with us to-day. But we must not go on trusting to miracles to save us from our own silly habits. The miracle of Dunkirk is one of the greatest in the history of England. Giving full credit to the British Navy for its improvisation, and to the Royal Air Force for its fury in attack on the German bombers, and to the British Army for its steadiness in defeat and in retreat, there still remains the miracle of the week of dead calm sea, plus two days of fog to cover the last clearing of the beaches.

That we got in and out of Norway with such small losses, in spite of letting the Germans get there first, is almost equally a miracle on a smaller scale.

The successes of the R.A.F. in the battles over the Channel, at odds of anything between 10 to 1 and 3 to 1 against were a miracle also—not because of the gallantry of our pilots and the excellence of the upkeep of their machines and armament, which was only what we rightly expected, but because, in a period when astounding stupidities were committed in the design and construction and production of aeroplanes as a whole, somebody was inspired to make our standard fighters carry eight machine guns. You may have noticed that the Public Relations Directorate of the Air Ministry has not as yet been inspired (which was not to be expected) or instructed (as it might have been) to relate to the public just how that miracle came about, or who was the miracle-worker responsible for it. Some day, I suppose, he will get a D.S.O. or even a K.B.E., without acknowledgment in the *Gazette* of the reason for his having it. That is the sort of thing which Those in Authority over Us like to keep secret, although they "see no objection to the publication" of patents which are likely to convey valuable ideas to the enemy.

The discovery and destruction of that German invasion fleet of barges and flat boats by the R.A.F. and the Navy off the coast of France on September 15—Hitler's Trafalgar, as a politician might call it, after Hitler's Peninsular War in Norway, and the Battle of the Bulge in France, and the dwindling of the air raids just before Coventry was smashed—was another miracle. Whether it was, in fact, the start of an intended invasion of this country or whether it was only a sea-sickness exercise for the German shock troops I do not pretend to know. But enough of them were sunk to show the German Staff that our Channel (it is still the English Channel in the atlases, not the British Channel) is a better anti-tank ditch than any of human construction.

Then there was the miracle of Taranto, when our Fleet Air Arm found enough of the Italian Fleet "at home," in the right sort of weather, to give us the margin of sea-power in the Mediterranean which we needed. That was the kind of thing to make men "pray as the flag-lieutenant prayed, at St. Vincent's cabin door. . . . Thou O Lord, has placed them right, to leeward on the bow"—as the late Commander Joe Bower, D.S.O., who wrote as "Klaxon" in the last war, told in one of his great sea poems.

Still more lately we have had the Greek miracle which has given us the use of some nice handy aerodromes from which to worry the Italians, and, if we have the sense, to bomb the Rumanian oil-fields and refineries. The Italians did not expect the Greeks to stand up and fight. We knew that they were better than the Rumanians, but in the last war the individual Greek was not up to the Bulgar or Serb or Turk.

The Greeks only had one aviator in those days who could be reckoned as in any class of war pilot. And he was lost while flying over the sea.

But we must stop expecting miracles. "The Lord helps those who help themselves"—and the time has come for us to do a bit of helping ourselves.

Take that matter of Rumanian oil. From Salonika, where there is a pretty good aerodrome, to the oil areas is only about 300 miles—a trifle more than from London to Paris. What is to stop us, unless the Germans send a lot of fighters down the Danube? We could use the older Blenheims, or even Battles, for a job of that sort. And any of us who spend time in the country know how much difficulty fighters find in catching a well-flown bomber the pilot of which

AN AMAZING AERIAL FEAT IN AUSTRALIA: A PILOT LANDS TWO MACHINES TOGETHER AFTER A MID-AIR COLLISION

A few weeks ago the aeronautical world of this country was startled by a report that two Ansons which had collided in mid-air and become interlocked had been landed successfully by the pilot of the upper aircraft. Doubts were expressed as to the truth of this statement, but the receipt of this picture from Australia clinches the matter. Leading Aircraftman Fuller was flying at 3,000 ft. over Brocklesby in New South Wales when his machine became interlocked with another Anson as shown above: instructing his own comrades and those of the lower aircraft to bale out, Fuller brought both planes safely to earth, making a belly landing and causing only slight damage. Only one man was slightly injured—a remarkable feat. The pilot found that the two aircraft formed a crude biplane; he flew with the controls of the upper plane and the fast-failing engines of the lower and found that he had "the gliding angle of two bricks." The weird combination came to rest after a run of 200 yards along the aerodrome

knows how to use cloud-cover, and how he can drop down, pop out of the clouds, bomb and disappear again.

Mr. Hugh Dalton, M.P., has been telling the world on the B.B.C. how splendidly we are doing in blockading Germany, and particularly how well our destruction of Germany's oil supplies is working. Well, here is a chance of stopping the oil at source—like Income Tax, or a very good way of levying Commodity Tax.

The Germans never worried about flying over Holland or Belgium before the *Blitz*. To-day they circle round brilliantly lighted Dublin to get a geographical "fix" from which to take their bearings on Liverpool, 130 miles away; so my Eirish friends tell me.

Which reminds me that when the Germans used to fly over Holland and Belgium the local Archie-guns used to fire at them. And one of our bombers which had lost its way in fog was shot down by a Belgian aviator in Belgian territory. But I have not heard anything about the Eirish Air Force or anti-aircraft guns firing on German trespassers. Which makes one wonder what would be the degree of their retaliation if the Royal Navy and the R.A.F. occupied Berehaven and Lough Swilly. We might help ourselves there.

Furthermore, knowing the Eirish, politically and personally, as few people do, I believe, in spite of all their denials, that, even though the U-boats may not have shore-depots officially arranged in the west of Ireland, they certainly are supplied with food and drink by the Eirish. They were in the last war, so why not in this, when the Eirish hate us more than they did then?

In those days supply-ships, most of them neutrals, used to drop drums of petrol and oil for the Germans, attached to moorings, off the west coast of Ireland, and the U-boats used to come up and collect them. When there was a westerly gale the drums used to be washed ashore in dozens, and the whole of western Ireland (no nonsense about Eirann or Eire then) used to motor on German petrol and lubricate with German oil—including the Royal Irish Constabulary, who grumbled that those robbers along the shore used to steal half the petrol out of the drums before handing them over to the police as ordered by the law.

A NEW R.A.F. RESCUE LAUNCH UNDERGOING ITS SPEED TRIALS: These fine seagoing craft are built by the British Power-Boat Company for rescuing airmen (both Allied and enemy) who come down in the sea. Note the turret in the fore part: this appears to resemble the power-driven turrets of many of the R.A.F. bombers. A constant watch is kept over the North Sea and Channel at all times: as soon as a plane is reported down in the sea, out dash these very fast craft on their mission of salvation. It is as a sort of reply to these vessels that the Germans have now installed rafts along the French coast—so that they, too, can effect rescues of their personnel

IN FULL FLYING KIT: A CANADIAN PILOT OF THE R.A.F. This is the apparatus worn by a fighter pilot during operational work over Britain. The new-type goggles of the R.A.F. are being worn, with the coloured eye-shield above, to screen his eyes from the sun's rays. Attached to his mouth are the telephone transmitter and on the right the oxygen tube for high-altitude flying. This pilot is a member of a Canadian Squadron which has been prominent in the defence of the London area and which has already brought down more than seventy enemy raiders

Another way in which we might help ourselves, and one of our biggest customers, is by having aeroplanes, at any rate air-frames, made in India. Naturally, if one mentions the idea one is told the story of the native Indian tailor who copied a pair of polo breeches made by Pool so exactly, including a stitched-up cut in one knee, that the owner could not tell the difference between the two pairs. That is intended as a jeer at the Indian's intelligence.

But if Indian mechanics can make whatever is to be the successor of the Hurricane or Spitfire so exactly—including dents in the metal covering—that the pilots and mechanics can't tell the difference between the Indian and the British product, why not let them get on with it?

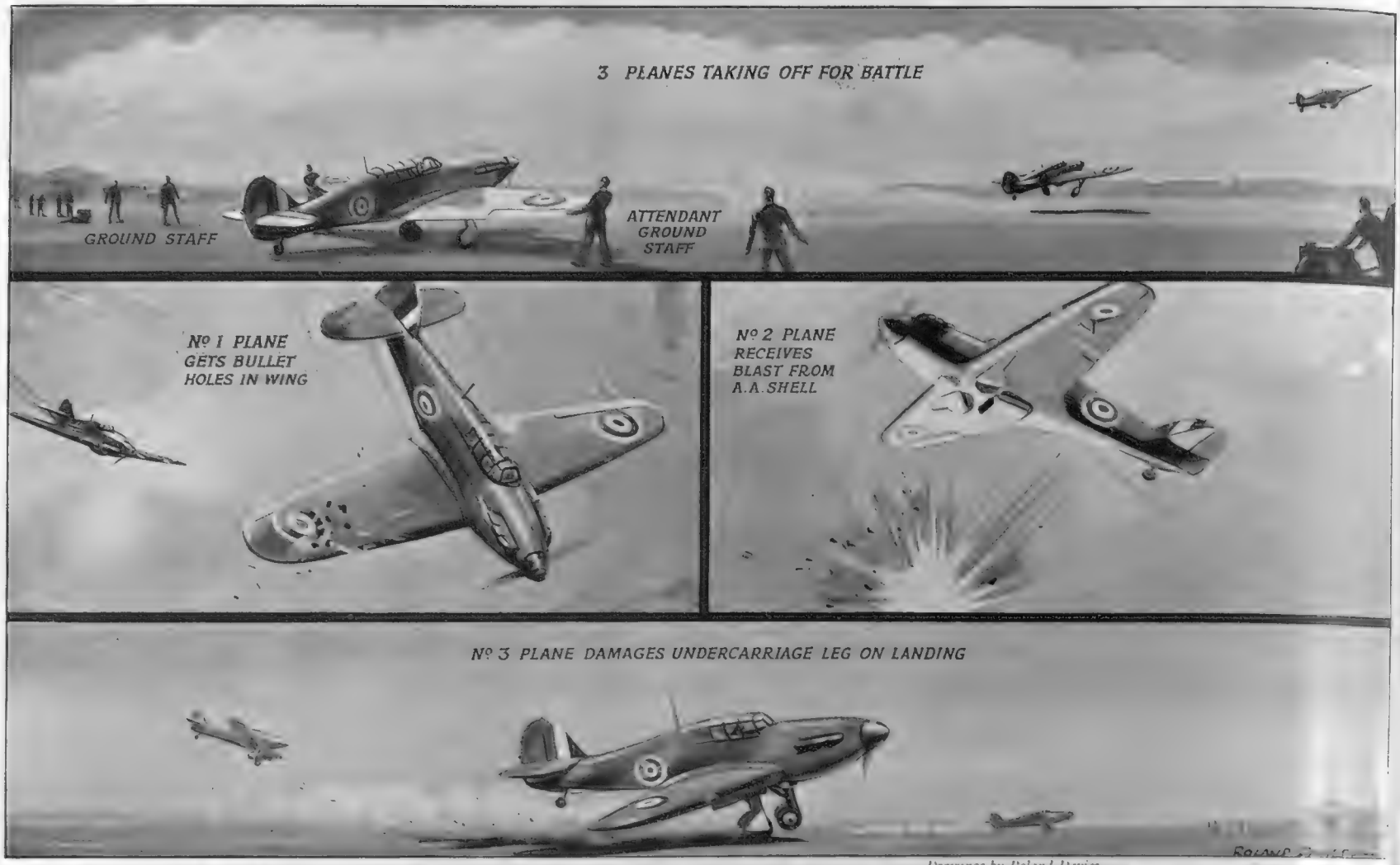
We, in our insular ignorance, think of every Indian as a sort of Gandhi, with a loin-cloth and a goat, who lives on rice and *chupattis*. How many people know that near Calcutta are ironworks which belong to a native firm and employ 75,000 (seventy-five thousand) hands, which supply one-fifteenth of the crude iron of the British Empire? I am told that there are only about forty or fifty white men on the production side of the business. They make the finest quality armour-plate—there is a very funny story of the War Office and its dealings with them in this material. And naturally they can make anything else of metal that is wanted.

Bren guns (see official statements) are already made in India in quantities. And, don't forget, Indian sword-blades have been famous for centuries, comparable with the best of Toledo or Damascus. After that, all-metal air-frames ought to be a job for mere apprentices. And we could get motors for them from America.

I gather that the objection among official people here is that if we let the Indians get going on aircraft production they might go on with it after the war, or they might take to making motor-cars or machine tools and kill our markets in the East. My answer to that is if we have so little confidence in our own ability as designers of newer and better types that we are afraid we cannot keep ahead of our own pupils, we had better go out of business right now.

The immediate need is for more and more aeroplanes, here and for Sir Robert Brooke-Popham's Far East Command at Singapore. Never mind what happens after the war to the factories which make them, or what those factories do. Is there a war on, or isn't there?

FOR NIGHT FLYING OPERATIONS: This is the type of parachute used to illuminate a target during night operations. Hundreds of these are being made for the night bombers of the R.A.F.; they are made of pure silk, like the pilots' own parachutes—hence the necessity for conserving the country's silk supply



Drawings by Roland Davies

MAINTENANCE WORK IN THE R.A.F.: WHAT CONTINUOUS FLYING MEANS TO A SMALL FLIGHT OF THREE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT: Apart from crashes, planes in combat suffer comparatively minor damage and require urgent repairs to make them airworthy again (*see notes under bottom drawing*)

Drawing by S. Drigen

HOW THE CREW OF A BRITISH BOMBER, AFLOAT AT SEA, WERE RESCUED BY A BLENHEIM: Crippled after a recent flight over Germany and forced to land on the sea, a bomber's crew has just been rescued through the vigilance of a Blenheim aircraft. The bomber was hit by anti-aircraft fire: soon everything movable was jettisoned—machine-guns, bomb-sights, ammunition, flares, instruments. As the plane hit the water, the crew lay on the floor to lessen the jar: then the collapsible rubber boat was thrown out and the crew clambered on to it. Lighting flares to attract attention, a Blenheim soon appeared overhead; signalling to the shore, a destroyer soon appeared, and a boat pulled out to rescue the thoroughly wet and chilly airmen

THE FLYING OF WAR PLANES IN BATTLE

A Note on Maintenance and on the Work of the Ground Crews

Much discussion and speculation turns at present on whether squadrons of the German Air Force are being transferred from their aerodromes in France, Belgium and Holland to a sphere of operations farther east. Some support is lent to the theory that such movements are in progress by the arrival in Belgium of the greater part of an Air Army of the Regia Aeronautica, formerly based at Milan. The inference is that this Air Army is relieving certain squadrons of the Luftwaffe.

This movement of large numbers of aeroplanes from one scene of action to another brings into prominence the subject of maintenance work and repairs, as essential to the efficient operation of an Air Force as the quality of the machines and the training of the crews. The ground crews receive little of the limelight, yet their role is a vital link in the chain of air operations. For, just as a racehorse must be carefully tended after it returns from a race, so must an aeroplane be as well cared for when it comes back from a raid on enemy territory. Before it takes off again, the structure and the engine must be examined in detail for possible hits or damage. Any repairs must be made good, petrol and oil checked, hydraulic pressures verified for the operation of undercarriage, flaps, airscrews, and so forth, guns rearmed and radio inspected.

The responsibility resting on ground crews is immense, and the organisation which efficient working demands cannot be set up in a short while. Before our Advanced Air Striking Force flew to France in the first days of September 1939, careful and detailed preparations had been made for its arrival, and stores and repair depots were laid down. Much of the maintenance work had to be done in the open in bitter cold. It must be far more difficult for the Germans now on those same aerodromes, both in the face of repeated attacks from aeroplanes of the Bomber and Coastal Commands of the R.A.F. In those circumstances aeroplanes which have returned with but slight damage cannot be repaired and become total "write offs."

In the Royal Air Force each operational aeroplane has its own ground crew allotted to it, just as it has its own flying crew. Specialist armourers,

The first of the three planes in the drawing damage from bullet holes in the wing: in up, as shown above, for the necessary repair carried out. The second plane has suffered

electricians, and so forth do specialist jobs in the aeroplanes of a squadron. But the basic crew attached to each aeroplane takes a special pride in its charge, and would rather suffer a thousand perils themselves than send out their flying crew in an aeroplane in anything but perfect condition.

The same principle, and possibly, to some extent, the same devotion, exists in the Luftwaffe and the Regia Aeronautica. We know, for instance, that the greater part of the Italian ground-crews now in Belgium were flown from Italy in the aeroplanes of their command.

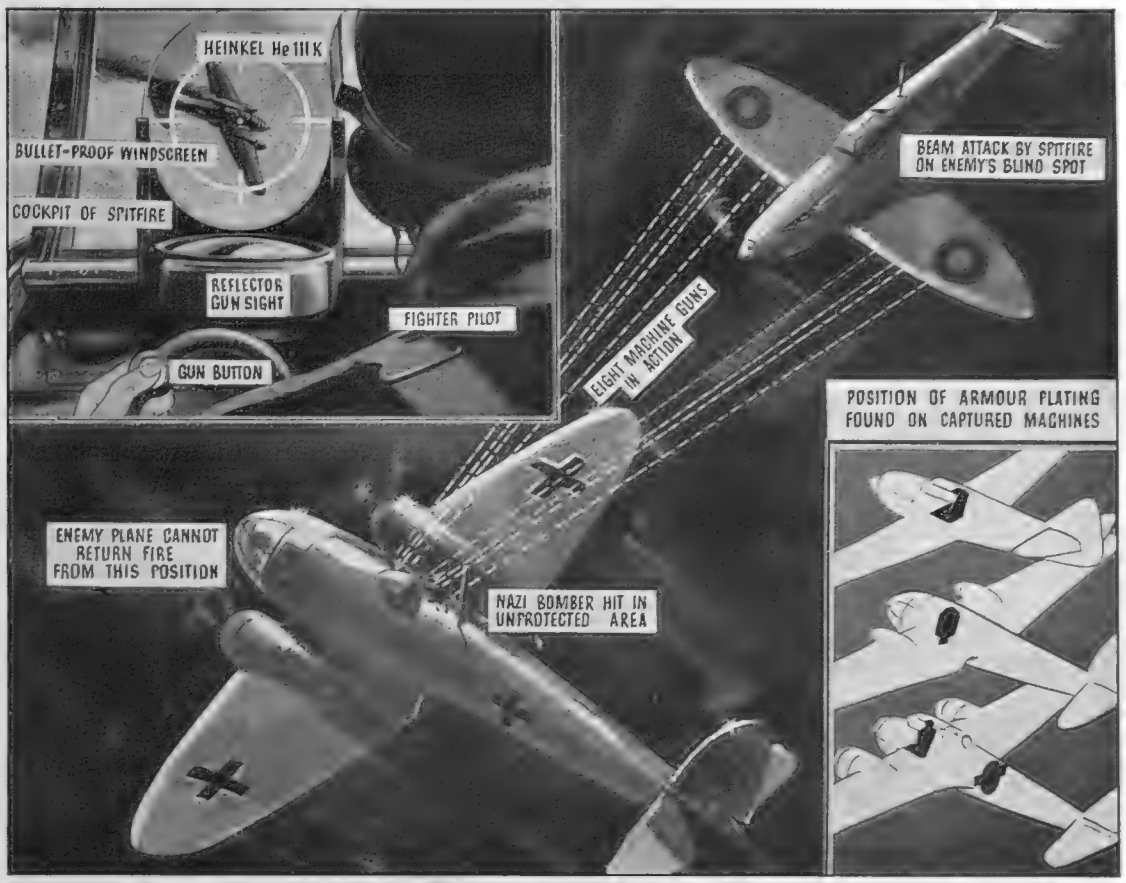
Can we expect that the same thing may be done by the Germans in moving east? There the fundamental make-up of German Air Armies comes into force. Each squadron has attached to it a certain number of transport aeroplanes which can carry the whole personnel of a unit. There is no doubt that the German Air Force is exceedingly mobile, and that large numbers of aeroplanes can be moved comparatively large distances in a short while, complete with servicing equipment.

Nevertheless, the equipment necessary for any but the shortest campaign cannot be transported in this manner. In establishing air bases along the Channel coasts for attacks on Great Britain, the German preparations lasted for a month or more. Workshops have to be set up capable of removing whole wings from aeroplanes to make repairs, of jacking-up heavy bombers while new undercarriages are fitted, or of changing a whole cylinder-block. Tackle to remove complete engines and fitting new ones is not too difficult to arrange, but the supply of such new engines is limited.

If Germany seriously contemplates a full-scale campaign in the east, there can be little doubt that preliminary ground-crews have been sent on ahead. That being so, our Intelligence Service must know all about it. Swift as blows are from the air to-day, the ground preparations still take time and are liable to give the show away.

That is where we possess one great advantage in the Mediterranean, for our aircraft-carriers are floating and movable workshops in themselves, fitted with every mechanical device needed for quick and efficient maintenance and repair. Sea power and air power together will prove invincible in the long run.

John R. Beech



AN IMPROVED METHOD OF ATTACK NOW EMPLOYED BY R.A.F. FIGHTERS

Questions have been asked recently by the uninitiated as to why the average "bag" of the R.A.F. at one time recently dropped suddenly, and then again returned to the normal ratio of three to one. The answer to these questions is that German bombers have had armour-plating installed to cover their vulnerable spots and have equipped their planes with "self-sealing" petrol tanks, thus making a "kill" a much more difficult proposition. The R.A.F. have replied by using improved fighting tactics and by finding new soft spots. One such method illustrated by our artist is the "beam attack." Swooping in at a terrific speed, the pilot fires into the vital but unprotected broadside of the bomber. This tactic requires great skill, as the pilot's firing time is reduced to a fraction of a second and requires great judgment to arrive in the correct position. The top left picture shows the position from the pilot's cockpit; the small illustrations on the right show some recent examples of German armour-plating found in captured bombers

MAINTENANCE WORK IN THE R.A.F.: Why the ground crews have so much work to do in servicing fighter aircraft

In the upper left has suffered minor consequence the plane has to be tipped work before further flights can be from blast from an anti-aircraft shell. The frame has to be stripped partially and then tested and tuned-up. The third aircraft, which damaged its undercarriage when landing, has had this dismantled and repaired. In addition to this repair work, each plane has to undergo everyday attention by armourers, cleaners, mechanics, electricians, etc., etc. It has been estimated that for every pilot in the air fighting or bombing it is necessary to have—on the ground—another thirty or forty men to keep his aircraft in good order and to keep the pilot posted with all the necessary information

H.M.S. "RENOWN" TOOK UP THE CHASE AND FIRED HER GREAT GUNS AT THE FLEEING ITALIAN ENEMY OFF SARDINIA

An impression of a striking incident in the action off Sardinia on November 27, by Montague Dawson. The smoke screen low down on the horizon conceals the fleeing Italian warships

H.M.S. "REVENGE," A BATTLESHIP OF THE ROYAL SOVEREIGN CLASS, WITH A SPEED OF 22 KNOTS

A camera-study of the *Revenge* working up to a good spot of speed but not fast enough to catch Italian ships making for port. She may have been one of the slower consorts of the *Renown* in the action off Sardinia, but no official details of all the ships engaged have yet been published

A BIG SHIP ENGAGES THE ENEMY in the Mediterranean

The action off Sardinia on Wednesday, November 27, was remarkable for the presence of big ships of the British Navy which had evidently been forming a part of a powerful patrol fleet which had been sweeping the inland sea in search of enemy craft. The giant aircraft-carrier *Ark Royal* was also present and took a very vital part in the action as the base from which the Fleet Air Arm operated. A number of enemy vessels were sighted on the morning of November 27. The Mediterranean waters must have foamed white as the British vessels steered for the enemy's position. We know, officially, that there were big ships present and that their speed did not permit them to maintain any prolonged pursuit of the enemy. This had to be taken up by the battle-cruiser *Renown* (37,000 tons fully loaded) with a speed of 29 knots. The other vessels rapidly fell astern—the actual composition of the British fleet has not been divulged. Even the *Renown* was unable to close with the fleeing Italian force, and the work of attack had to be continued very successfully, by the Fleet Air Arm

H.M.S. "QUEEN ELIZABETH," WHO GIVES HER NAME TO A WHOLE BATTLESHIP CLASS, SEEN FROM THE AIR WHILE TURNING

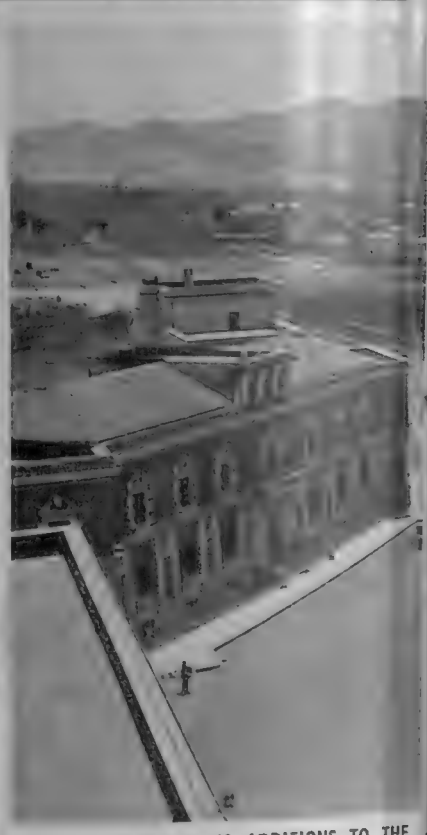
A camera-study by Charles Brown of this famous British battleship. Her speed is 24 knots since her renovation in 1937 when she was reconstructed by Messrs. Parsons; she is of handsome, well-balanced design and has a famous record behind her. This air view shows clearly her colossal main armament of 15-in. guns

HOW THE SNOW SETTLES ON THE BALKAN MOUNTAIN-TOPS AND CREEPS DOWN THE SIDES WITH THE ADVANCE OF WINTER

Snow has already been reported from the fighting areas of Albania, and should the early winter prove severe, the conditions awaiting the Italian Army are very serious indeed. The higher peaks retain snow in many cases throughout the summer, and early in the winter fresh falls occur with more or less certainty. The rivers will rise and cut off certain areas from any ordinary means of communication. Military bridges would have to be built under very trying circumstances; this factor of communications gains in importance from the fact that the enemy forces cannot possibly be fed off the country. Regiments may find themselves in a starving condition. In a deliberately unfriendly country many of the Italian troops may well be caught in highly dangerous situations

A BORDER VILLAGE STREAMING LIKE A CASCADE DOWN A STEEP HILLSIDE

A very good idea of rural conditions in Albania can be gained from this glimpse of a border village near the Greek Macedonian frontier. This particular village consists of well-built Greek houses. The angle at which the hill pitches down to the river valley below is really remarkable, and more astonishing still is it that this particular site should have been chosen for a village settlement



KING ZOG'S ADDITIONS TO THE

Before the Italian invasion at Eastertide upon a peaceful both in opening up communications to various on the edge of the old city of Tirana. Most of officials. The view given here, the plain beyond

The difficulties of road-making in Albania are immense, writes a *Sphere* correspondent. Apart from the natural ruggedness of the landscape, the mountains, the risk of landslides, the uneven and forested ground, a large number of bridges must be built. Although the Italians have done quite a lot of concrete bridge-building, on very modern lines, there is need for many more to traverse the deep gorges that in winter are filled with swirling mountain torrents. The sanitary and electrical systems of

THE COUNTRY OF ONCE FREE MEN: The Mountain Land of the Albanians, through which the Italo-Greek War is now Raging

A LAND WHERE THE WINDING MOTOR ROAD HAS USURPED ENTIRELY THE FUNCTION OF THE RAILROAD

From the rough cart-road and the horse-pack track, Albania leapt at once to the metalled motor road, skipping over the intervening stage of railroad development. During the Italians' short tenure of the country they have, as is their wont, improved the road communications of the country, which are now being used against them. Good roads are to one's advantage when success crowns a military adventure, but quite the reverse when the enemy succeeds in turning the tables. This view shows the Koritza-Tirana road

ALBANIAN CAPITAL WERE EXTENSIVE DURING HIS REIGN

land, King Zog had been doing a considerable amount of progressive work, districts by new roads and bridges and in constructing a modern quarter these buildings were used for official purposes or as the residences of Tirana, shows a part of the main square, with residential villas

Durazzo, the summer capital, have been revised to a certain extent. A small country with truculent people and almost impassable scenery; a land where modernism grows alongside mediævalism, and where some of the traditions and habits belong to pagan ages, carrying one back through the unchanging centuries as far as one wishes to follow; a land with small oil possibilities, and extensive agricultural and mineral resources; and yet abandoned many years ago by Britain as being "not worth the candle"; a land on which every inch wants expenditure, be it to drain the fever-ridden littoral plain, to quarry and mine the mountains, or to build even the most elementary communcations. This is the land Italy boasted as her second empirical conquest.

IN KROUYA, THE HOME OF SCANDERBEG, ALBANIA'S NATIONAL HERO

The country's fifteenth-century hero came from the highly picturesque little town of Krouya, a beauty spot of Upper Albania. The view given above shows the crag upon which stand an ancient fortress and the palace of a former Bey as seen from the narrow, cobbled streets of the village which clusters airily at the base of the uppermost crag. The whole group, bazaars and remains of former greatness, towers dizzily on an isolated rock above the wide surrounding plains Before the days of the liberation of Albania in the last century. Krouya witnessed its share of Oriental splendour, with picturesque retainers in full Albanian dress moving here and there in the vicinity of the Bey's palace

The PROBLEM of the LIBYAN DESERT and its WATER SUPPLY

ON THE LIBYAN-EGYPTIAN FRONTIER: This picture gives a good idea of how the Italians carry out the colonisation of Northern Africa. First of all comes this "kernel" of the future town—a group of concrete buildings for the civil and military authority of the region, walled in for safety; then come good roads linking up this newest town with its neighbours; then come the colonists, poor, hard-working peasants from Central and Northern Italy who have received grants of land in the vicinity. They sign on, as it were, for a number of years. This system entails constant government assistance especially in the early stages; over and above all, the colonists are dependent on Italy for the most vital of supplies—water!

AN ITALIAN AIRMAN, SHOT DOWN IN A FIGHT WITH THE R.A.F., RECEIVING MEDICAL ATTENTION AT A DESERT MEDICAL STATION

The Physical Difficulties Confronting Graziani: A Reason for his Long Pause in Front of a Desert which may Overwhelm Him

By A. BEEBY THOMPSON

IMPATIENCE is sometimes expressed at the apparent listlessness of the contesting armies in Libya, without regard for the many difficulties confronting the movements of large bodies of men in such an arid country. Absence of food, scarcity of water, non-existence of roads, heat in summer, and sandstorms are but some of the troubles met with in desert travel. The desert is not the flat, featureless wilderness of sand so often pictured, for it is broken with huge depressions or ranges of rugged hills, and sand-dunes often assume the proportions of hills, rising in waves to a height of hundreds of feet, with steep sides and pointed crests, and always moving and changing in form. Long strips of the desert are indeed flat, hard, and stony, over which motor-vehicles can run at high speed, but other parts are soft dust or powdery chalk into which wheeled vehicles sink and on which no firm grip can be secured by tyres.

The littoral belt between Alexandria and Sollum, where opposing British and Italian forces have prepared defensive positions, is the only part where considerable bodies of men can be fed and watered with comparative ease, due to the flat nature of the terrain and the presence of small quantities of potable water within reach; reasonable road facilities and ample sources of food supply are not far distant. Due to a rainfall of some 6 ins. to 8 ins. a year this coastal region also supports a certain growth of vegetation; indeed, rain crops are regularly grown with moderate success in the spring. Proximity to the sea also tempers the climate in winter and summer. Inland rainfall diminishes to a negligible amount, being only ¼ in. a year at Siwa, and a rugged topography replaces the flat strips that follow the coast-line between a ridge of consolidated dunes and the scarps defining the desert proper.

Rain falling on the bare, rocky land above the scarp rushes seawards in the numerous gullies and collects in the basins behind the dunes where it is unable to find an outlet to the sea. It is this water and the silt it deposits which not only sustains the crops but saturates the highly permeable detrital limestones that underlie much of the dune country at a shallow depth. The rainfall of Libya sharply diminishes southwards of the Maritime strip and an almost rainless belt extends to near parallel 22 deg. N. of the equator, or, say, to line of Wadi Halfa. Over an area of some hundreds of thousands of square miles the only habitable spots with cultivation are the few scattered oases where there are either springs or sweet water is available at shallow depths.

Until the advent of the motor-car very little was known of the Libyan desert and mystery surrounded the causes of its oases and springs, but recent desert expeditions and researches by Ball, Beadnell, Walpole, and princely Egyptian explorers have brought to light surprising and unexpected facts concerning the desert topography and of the distribution of water, sand-dunes and ancient trade routes. The most astonishing result was the discovery of gigantic depressions considerably below sea-level, the origin of which became the subject of much speculation. That of Quattara, only 80 miles from Alexandria and 40 miles distant from the Mediterranean, stirred most interest, due to its immense size and its proximity to the delta. Schemes were at once entertained for its useful employment, such as inland waterway and fishery or a source of electrical power generation by admitting the sea, or its use as a sump for drainage of the lower delta. As a source of power for Egypt it was calculated by Ball that something like 270,000 horse-power could be developed by admitting such a volume of sea water into the depression as would ensure an evaporation equal to the rate of inflow, thus avoiding any loss of head at the turbines through a rise of water-level.

Detailed surveys and prolonged investigations showed that all these schemes were attended with difficulties which, if not insuperable, were of such a magnitude as to discourage immediate action. Levelling showed that a high ridge separated the coast from the depression, and that an open cut was not feasible the whole way. Tunnels of the size demanded for such great volumes of water introduced financial and engineering questions which could not be faced with equanimity. Ball calculated that to fill this hollow, much larger than the valley occupied by the Dead Sea and Jordan valley, to sea-level involved a volume of water equal to about fourteen times that carried by the Nile in an average year.

No less than twelve basins that reach below sea-level besides Quattara are now known, of which the chief are Faiyum, Wadi Rayan, and Siwa, but other great depressions further inland not reaching sea level are Kharga, Dakhea, Farafra, Baharia, all between parallels 24 deg. and 29 deg. The Faiyum and Wadi Rayan have received most past attention from irrigation engineers on account of their possible utilisation as a regulator of the Nile flood for the delta, being situated so conveniently near the river and the delta head.

The only rational explanation for these great depressions is that they have been caused by wind scour, for although geological reasons can be found

THE EGYPTIAN FRONTIER POST OF SOLLUM AND THE COASTAL SCARP SEEN FROM THE AIR

This is one of the supply bases for General Graziani's Army, which has been resting for so long in the Western Desert, waiting for the order to attack Egypt. Sollum is now reported to be heavily fortified with artillery brought from Fort Capuzzo. Sollum and Capuzzo have both been heavily bombarded by the British during recent months—by air and from the sea. It is interesting to note in the picture how gullies have been worn here and there through the rock masses with the passage of time. These rock masses are sometimes of limestone and sometimes of clay. The various military buildings and earth works are clearly brought out in this aerial view

THE VARIED FEATURES OF THE LIBYAN DESERT WHICH WOULD HINDER AND PROBABLY GRAVELY ENDANGER ANY ENEMY ADVANCE

The Italian force, based on Sidi el Barrani and Sollum, faces a desert terrain which may well have given pause to the commander of any force, not to speak of one who is uncertain of the "will-to-fight" of his assembled battalions. In a general atlas the region will be described as the Libyan Desert and the reader may well imagine this as a sandy waste of dead-level surface, over which cars could run in any direction. This would be true of an area to the S.W., but that is not a direction useful to the Italian command. Their lines of advance are eastward or south-eastward, if they are to strike vitally at Egypt. If and when they ever did so, they would find a narrow shelf rising to some 300 ft. in height along the sea coast, as indicated by the light tone in the above map, which is largely based on one prepared by Dr. John Ball of the Survey of Egypt for "The Geographical Journal." This coast route has the advantage of fresh-water supply at intervals, fairly good road communications, and the noonday heat is tempered by the proximity of the sea. Nearly the whole of the route is level, but this would have the almost prohibitive military factor of the British Fleet on its left flank. Abandoning this route as impracticable, the next would be a S.E. line running across the Libyan Plateau, rising to some 900 ft. above sea-level. It would not be easy going over this gully-infested region. It would lead to a narrow band of sea-level territory, heralding a plunge into the Quattara Depression, an astonishing natural feature presenting a large flat area below sea-level. This has a high scarp on its N.W. side down which an invading force would have to proceed. It would be no pleasant job getting into this depression, and also very awkward getting out. The two curving lines show first, where water is to be found near the surface, and secondly at about 300 ft. from the surface

to account for the initiation of erosion, no other agency can be suggested for their progressive deepening in undisturbed stratified formation lying almost horizontal. The most consistent feature noted is the tendency for scarps and high cliffs to form on their northern edges, with gentler slopes on their southern sides.

The source of the water which for an unknown period has fed the Libyan oases has long been a theme for speculation, as there is no present-day rainfall anywhere near that would adequately account for the large volumes which issue from the ground and are used for irrigating crops and dates. The Nile would seem at first sight the natural and only probable source of supply, yet close study of the river gives no indication of losses; indeed, the reverse is the case, for near Dakka, 150 miles south of Aswan, the river is actually fed by a heavy discharge of water from beds into which it has cut its channel. Within a certain distance of the Nile where it crosses permeable formations there is an ebb and flow of water with the fluctuating level of the river, but this influence is purely local and has a balancing effect upon the Nile flood. Other factors which discourage the Nile theory of origin are the usual high temperature and saline contents of the oases waters.

However difficult it is to explain the mastery of flow over resistance in long-distance travel, Ball has submitted very convincing data to show that the oases water originates from distant rainfall, and he has by correlation of surface and static water-levels shown that there is a regular water table sloping northwards in a direction that fixes the Chad basin region of equatorial Africa as the intake. The lines of equal pressure are only seriously disturbed near oases where much pressure water is released and the static water-level is depressed. Acceptance of this contention does not infer that unlimited quantities of water can be withdrawn without endangering loss of head and reduction or loss of flow, for already the fruits of imprudent development by modern methods have been noticed at Kharga. In this oasis good land has been thrown out of cultivation by a cessation of flow of some wells on higher ground, whilst other low parts have been rendered valueless by conversion into swamps through excessive and uncontrolled watering.

Obviously artesian flowing water can only be struck where the surface level is lower than the static water table, but assuming the conclusions of Ball to be correct, potable water should be reached almost anywhere in the Libyan desert, except where crystalline rocks break the continuity of the Nubian sandstone group which covers much of the area as a little disturbed, rarely inflected, and gently inclined sheet containing the permeable sandstones through which water circulates in its slow movement northwards. Along the coastal region the Nubian Cretaceous formation is expected to occur at some unpredictable depth under cover of a considerable thickness of Tertiary sediments unsuited for water-yielding purposes, and although pressure water might be struck, there is the recognised contingency that it might be too saline for potable purposes, due to stagnancy caused by the Mediterranean barrier. There is also the admitted danger that losses occasioned by seepages in the Quattara and other depressions to the south may have so lowered the pressure that water would not rise to anywhere near the surface.

The existence of many Roman rock cisterns, even near the Mediterranean coast itself, corroborates the view that rainfall has been low and that desert conditions persisted long ago.

THE REMAINS OF AN ITALIAN BOMBER BROUGHT DOWN OVER MERSAH MATRUH, IN THE WESTERN DESERT, DURING THE GREAT AIR BATTLE ON OCTOBER 31, WHEN EIGHT ENEMY AIRCRAFT WERE SHOT DOWN IN FLAMES BY THE R.A.F.

AN R.A.F. AIRMAN MARKS THE GRAVE OF FIVE ITALIAN AIRMEN WHO WERE KILLED DURING THE AIR BATTLE, OVER MERSAH MATRUH. NEARBY LIES THE WRECKAGE OF ONE OF THE CRASHED 'PLANES

BRITAIN'S NAVAL

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN NAVAL BASE AT ALEXANDRIA WITH THREE COUNTY CLASS CRUISERS IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE VIEW

The continuous use of Alexandria as a naval base dates from recent times. Prior to the Abyssinian trouble, British ships had occupied the harbour from time to time, but at that period Malta and Gibraltar were considered sufficient for the Navy's needs. The above air view shows a typical aspect of the naval harbour during the past few years.

ALTHOUGH details have naturally been suppressed in wartime, the authorities have made no secret of the importance of Alexandria to the British, especially to the Fleet, which has been working from the Egyptian port since the beginning of the trouble, very much to the disgust of the Italians, who periodically claim to have bombed it out of the position, but who have really made very little impression on the excellent defences.

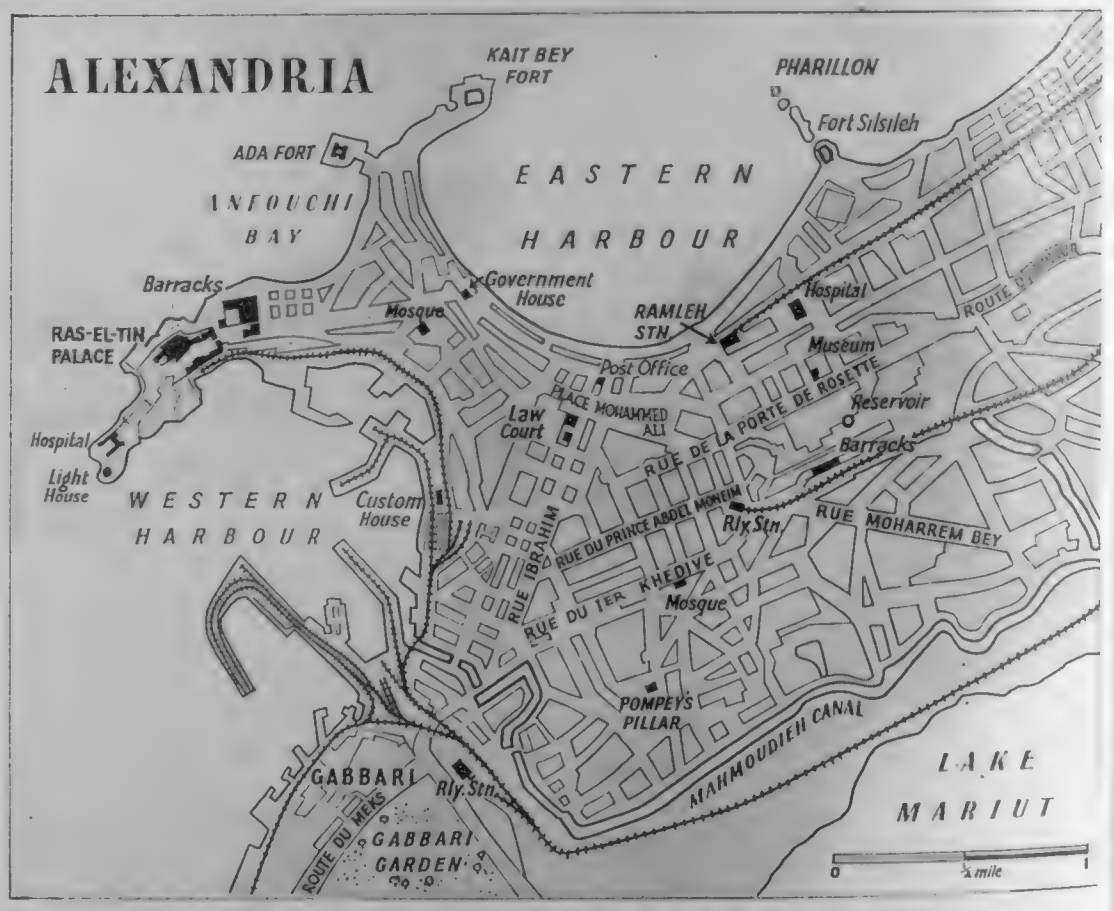
Alexandria has always been a strategic point of great importance, with a natural harbour whose advantages have been greatly improved by man since the very earliest days and in later days. Mehemet Ali, as the almost independent Viceroy of Egypt, developed Alexandria in the early days of the nineteenth century, both for commercial and naval purposes. It was the terminal of the Overland Route to India before the Suez Canal was cut, and is the natural outlet of Egyptian exports, normally handling about 90 per cent. of her cargo trade.

Big breakwaters, first completed in 1873 and lengthened in 1907, enclose the harbour and give it excellent protection from the weather, the entrance between their ends being half a mile wide, but scattered rocks left in the entrance when the deep-water harbour was built make its defence very much easier. There are two fairways for shipping, one 600 ft. wide and over 35 ft. deep, the other narrower and shallower. A mole divides the inner harbour, 464 acres, from the outer, which is about 1,400 acres in extent.

Always expecting attack from his Turkish overlord, Mehemet Ali erected strong fortifications, which were improved in 1841, and modernised and strengthened by Arabi Pasha about 1880. These were the fortifications battered by the British Fleet in 1882, but they have since been replaced on modern lines.

Last year, when the position was becoming more and more threatening, the big floating dock which had been of such service during the late war was towed from Portsmouth to Alexandria by Dutch tugs, and as it was capable of lifting the biggest capital ships, it immediately doubled the value of the base, which already possessed excellent docking and repair facilities on a smaller scale normally used for commercial ships. The Egyptian Government owned an up-to-date dry dock, 520 ft. long by 64 ft. wide, capable of accommodating everything but capital ships,; there were three patent slips in the Government Arsenal which could draw small craft out of the water for repairs, and the old Khedivial Mail Company also possessed very useful repair facilities. With the good water in the port and its approaches, the excellent protection against weather and the communications with the heart of Egypt, Alexandria forms an ideal base, and the Fleet cemented its popularity by spending a good deal of time there before the outbreak of war, getting thorough experience of the area and, incidentally, spending about £5,000 a day in the city while it was in port.

Frank C. Bowen



THE HARBOURS OF ALEXANDRIA, IN RELATION TO THE CITY.

Although most of Alexandria has a modern air, parts of it are built upon or incorporated with remains of great antiquity. The two branches of the upper or eastern harbour mark the sites of very ancient harbour works dating from Alexandrian times. Pompey's pillar is actually the best-preserved antique in the whole district. The city of Alexander, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, Cleopatra and Hypatia is hard to find. The position of the Royal Palace of Ras-el-Tin is shown at the extreme end of the western peninsula. The main administrative and commercial portion of the city lies in the central part

BASE AT ALEXANDRIA

The Historic City which Rises Once Again to a Position of Pre-eminence in World Politics and Naval Strategy

ALEXANDRIA to-day has all the appearance of a city at war, though Egypt has not actually declared war upon either Germany or Italy. The latter's entrance into the war, however, brought the enemy to the frontiers of Egypt, whose Government still preferred to remain a non-belligerent until attacked at some vital point, when the country would be defended. Many Egyptians are now wanting a more active policy, though at first there was a general desire to avoid war.

The presence of the Fleet in the Great Harbour, the streets crowded with soldiers — Anzacs, British Regular Army, Indian troops, coming and going off to some unknown destination—a complete black-out at night, all give the note of war. There was general enthusiasm when the mighty warships, cruisers and destroyers dropped their anchors in the harbour early this summer, giving a greatly increased sense of security. Since then Italy, while still not technically at war with Egypt, has dropped bombs on Alexandria on various occasions, causing some damage, but at the same time creating much laughter at the Italian claim to have "levelled Alexandria to the ground." The absurdity of this statement, which could be checked, has brought all Italian communiqués under suspicion.

From its foundation in 332 B.C. Alexandria became one of the most renowned of the cities of the Ancient World—the pharos giving light to all passing vessels was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was erected on the island, which was connected with the mainland by a long causeway.

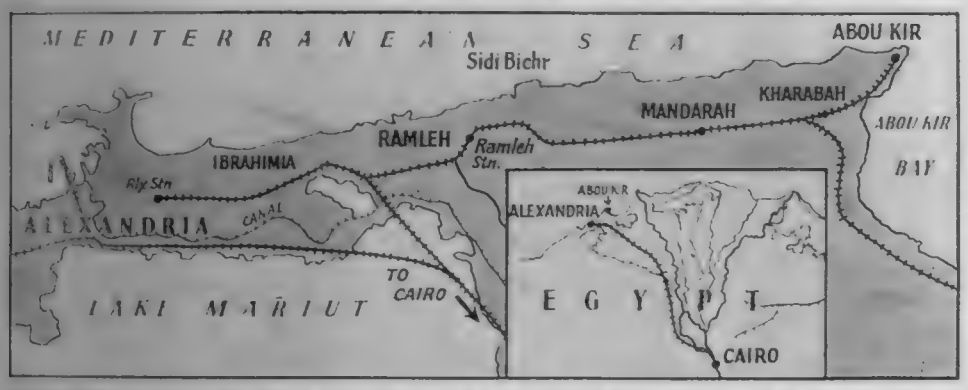
After the death of Alexander, Egypt was ruled by Ptolemy, one of the greatest of the generals who had supported the amazing young Greek on his triumphal march across Asia. Under the early Ptolemies Alexandria became the resort of all men of art, science and learning, who flocked to the great library and museum founded by Ptolemy Philadelphus, who is said to have gathered together some 400,000 manuscripts. The last of the Ptolemies was Cleopatra, who ensnared the elderly Julius Cæsar, and the virile Mark Antony, by her beauty, wit, and voluptuous charm. Her efforts to induce Antony to forswear Rome and become her husband and King of Egypt brought disaster both to herself and Antony. Egypt, upon her death, became a province of Rome.

The splendid library, with its priceless manuscripts, was burnt, while Cæsar was in Alexandria, due to his having fired his own boats during a sudden, unexpected attack from the Egyptians. Under the later Roman Emperors the city became the seat of Christian bishops, some of whom were, unfortunately, fired with zeal to found a theocracy.

Alexandria fell to the Muhammadans, becoming part of the Caliphate, and was under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Constantinople when Napoleon landed his troops at Adjmi, to the west of Alexandria, in 1798. The city was captured with ease; after which Napoleon, in the manner so familiar to us to-day, tried to persuade the Sultan that his invasion of a country with which France was not at war was a friendly act! The fleet which had conveyed him to Egypt was stationed in Aboukir Bay, to the east of Alexandria, and not in the harbour itself. It was discovered by Nelson, who risked the dangers of the shoal, behind which the fleet was sheltering, and inflicted a naval defeat of unprecedented character. Napoleon was left virtually a prisoner in Egypt.

AN AIR VIEW OF THE PROMONTORY CONTAINING THE RAS-EL-TIN PALACE

The Royal Palace faces the waters of the Mediterranean at the end of the peninsula formed by long silting-up after the building of the ancient pharos. The position of the palace is indicated on the ground plan of the city given on the opposite page



THE POSITION OF OUR EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN BASE IN RELATION TO ABOUKIR AND TO CAIRO

Alexandria is connected with Cairo by rail and bythe Mahmoudieh Canal with the Nile. There is also a local railway line to Ramleh, and to Aboukir Bay, the scene of Nelson's striking victory, by which Napoleon was cut off in Egypt. Midway to Aboukir is Ramleh, the popular summer resort of well-to-do Alexandrians. Lake Mariut gives a Venetian air to the city

On right—

THE CENTRAL SQUARE OF ALEXANDRIA, THE PLACE MOHAMMED ALI WITH STATUE OF THE VICEROY

The chief square of Alexandria is the Place Mohammed Ali, named after the Turkish ruler, who, deprived of Syria, was acknowledged as Viceroy of Egypt in 1841 by a group of Powers. This equestrian statue figures at one side of the palm-lined square

THE MODERN FLAT-ROOFED BUILDINGS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE QUARTER OF ALEXANDRIA

This view is taken looking towards the big harbour with its long moles stretching from left and right in the distance. In the immediate foreground are the houses of the older portion of the city, crowding up to the big flat-roofed buildings of the administrative quarter. The Italian Air Force has made one or two isolated raids upon the city causing casualties among civilians. Exaggerated claims by Italians have made the Alexandrians doubt all Italian communiqués

THE RISE of the HOME GUARD

An Army "the like of which the world has never seen before."

By JOHN BROPHY

IT began in a cloudless, sunny, but sinister early summer, when a British Expeditionary Force was in such dire and apparently insurmountable danger as never since Corunna, when defences across the Channel considered impregnable were crumbling, when every item of bare news numbed the mind. It began with a broadcast appeal for volunteers to take up arms and keep watch in their own districts, first and foremost against the parachute troops with which the Germans had confused and weakened the back-area resistance of the Low Countries and France.

The same night and the next morning the volunteers gave in their names at the nearest police station, and almost at once, in every town and village, some sort of local organisation was hastily improvised. No one at that time knew, or seemed to know, where was headquarters or what were its wishes. But the job was put in hand immediately in every part of the country, and every night small parties of men went out to guard vulnerable points or to make patrols along roads and footpaths, over moors and dales, watching the skies and the landscape within view. Their only uniform was a khaki brassard lettered "L.D.V.", and they armed themselves with what they could lay hands on, chiefly shot-guns and revolvers. The "old soldiers," the veterans of the 1914-18 war, who formed the hard core, now estimated at 40 to 50 per cent. of the whole force, knew how inadequate these arms would prove in face of a trained army with modern equipment. Among all the ominous news of those days of European disaster, nothing was so alarming to the experienced as the wireless appeal for shot-gun ammunition. Its implication was a nation almost defenceless on its own territory, and, when the war is over, there must surely be an enquiry into this most ill-judged of broadcasts.

The implication proved to be without foundation. The Local Defence Volunteers, as we were known till Mr. Churchill rechristened us the Home Guard, recruited informally but rapidly. Even the fact that the police were required to vouch for the good standing of each volunteer at a time when tens of thousands of men were living far from their peacetime homes, could not check the flow. First we were told that we numbered a quarter of a million, then half, then three-quarters, then the million. Now the strength is estimated at 1,700,000. Never was so large an army raised in so short a time. Moreover, it is a real army, performing its duties without fuss or confusion, steadily training for its specialised task. And at no time since the first few weeks has it been other than an army well and amply armed. For some time, as is well known, a great part of these arms, together with the appropriate ammunition, are of American manufacture. They were strange to handle at first, and, to members of a conservative race, not altogether pleasing. But they have been cleaned, stripped, assembled again, studied and *used*: and those who are best fitted to judge are well satisfied with them.

In the early days there were, inevitably, confusions and misunderstandings behind the scenes. I do not believe that anyone anywhere could justifiably complain of negligence or slackness. Such troubles as there were arose from growing pains immensely speeded up, from misapplied enthusiasm, from the fact that while this novel army of part-time volunteers was being created out of nothing, and doing duty even while it was forming and growing, the generals in high command had to recast their ideas to meet a new and obviously successful technique of warfare. Some units took immediately to a parade-ground smartness, a stiffish discipline, and the old, tried routine of squad and arms drill. They worked on the principle of starting from the beginning. Others devoted all their time and energy to their nightly guards and observation patrols and to field exercises at the week-end. There are still considerable divergences in outlook and practice between different Home Guard units, and this is probably inherent in the system. Elasticity has been promised us from Parliament. But the organisation by areas, zones, battalions, companies and platoons has now settled down. Commanders are put through rigorous training courses, and are then ready to pass on what they have learned. Winter relieves the Home Guard of many routine duties and the opportunity is being taken to make each unit progress steadily through a uniform scheme of training: certain essentials must be fulfilled, and when that is done the utmost latitude is given to the local commander. If invasion comes to-morrow, the Home Guard is ready to play its part in repelling it. If invasion comes later, it will be still better prepared. A network of local defence systems covers the whole country, and wherever the enemy succeeds in putting in an appearance there will be a Home Guard unit trained and ready to resist him. The British technique of home defence may now be compared to the old Roman gladiator. The Home Guard corresponds to the net used to trap and disable the opponent, and the regular forces represent the spear with which the finishing blow will be struck.

Probably very few people yet realise what a strange and almost miraculous event is the raising and equipping of this new model army. I have already commented on its huge numbers, completed during a few months of strain and trial. But that is only the beginning of the story. The Home Guard has other remarkable characteristics for historians to take note of. They will be hard put to it to find precedents. For this is an army raised, after an interval of twenty-two years, on the surviving basis of another army, the British Expeditionary Forces of 1914-18, whose members will always recall that after innumerable ordeals and frustrations they broke the German might once before. The backbone of the Home Guard is formed of the men who wear two or three or more ribbons to show that they have "done their bit" in the past.

Again, this is an army which draws no wages. The few allowances and compensations that may be claimed amount to very little, and in general the Home Guard may be said to cost the country nothing beyond the value of its arms and uniforms. From the point of view of national expenditure, it is the cheapest army imaginable. But its inexpensiveness does not stop short at that. The Home Guard is a part-time army. Until an invasion begins, Home Guardsmen carry out their guard and training duties in their spare time, and almost every man is engaged in productive work of some kind or another. In brief, the Home Guard consists of taxpayers who happen also, of their own free will, to be volunteer soldiers. They spend their working days in helping to raise the funds to pay for the war, and, incidentally, the astonishingly small bill for the cost of maintaining the army they belong to—an army the like of which the world has never seen before.

LOCAL AND INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST POINTS OF THIS GREAT ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS

Since its inception, initiative has been a strong point in the Home Guard. Local conditions and local practices have everywhere been taken into account, and a great deal has been left to the individual. The great level of intelligence amongst the rank and file has probably never been equalled in any army in the world before. Forty to fifty per cent. of Home Guards, too, have already experienced active service conditions before—in South Africa and in the Great War and elsewhere. Take the men pictured above—they are part of a local Home Guard in the Chiltern Hills. Within this company, Squire and farm workers work together: the men are trained by Lionel Lambourne, a soldier of the last war and a stockman on a local estate. A private picture-gallery in a local house has been transformed into an Orderly Room and Drill Hall, and the entire estate has been placed at the men's disposal. They work at their ordinary tasks all day, and at night put in five or six hours' training. Transport has been arranged, together with first-aid service, and a Mounted Squad is available at any time in an emergency

A DEMONSTRATION DURING ANTI-PARACHUTIST MANŒUVRES

This picture was taken at a recent demonstration by the Home Guard in the Yorkshire district. In the event of an invasion or of the descent of parachute troops, a knowledge of local topographical conditions will prove of the very greatest value. The speed with which the Home Guard was raised, and the enthusiastic manner in which all grades familiarised themselves with their new and voluntary tasks, will form a most inspiring record for the historian of the future

THE MODERN ARMY'S WINTER QUARTERS : The type of huts which are being provided to accommodate troops this winter. They are built of a special composition of light concrete, made in curved sections which are easily erected. Each hut, which houses twelve men, is lined with draught- and damp-proof material. A centrally placed stove provides the necessary warmth

MATTERS of MILITARY INTEREST

THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER'S VISIT TO EAST ANGLIA : His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, accompanied by Staff officers, seen during his recent two-day tour of the East Anglia Coastal Areas, where he watched exercises carried out by the local troops and inspected the coast defences of the area. He is seen watching the cooks of a Lancashire regiment at work

THE GUNNERS ON PARADE : Lieutenant-General Sir Ronald Adam, G.O.C.-in-C. Northern Command, on the occasion when he inspected a Heavy Regiment of the Royal Artillery. During the last war Sir Ronald served in France, Flanders and Italy and was awarded the D.S.O.

TWO OF HITLER'S SPIES EXECUTED : A soldier examining a wireless transmitting set which was found in the possession of two enemy agents, acting on behalf of Germany, who were executed at Pentonville Prison last week, following their conviction under the Treachery Act, 1940, at the Central Criminal Court. They were Jose Waldberg, a German, born in 1915 at Mainz, and Karl Meier, a Dutch subject of German origin, born at Koblenz in 1916. They had instructions to pose as refugees from enemy-occupied territory and to obtain information of a military nature which might be disclosed by careless talkers. They had been duped by their masters into believing that they would shortly be relieved by German invading forces

TANKS AND SCOUT CARS UNDER COVER : An incident during the large-scale exercises which took place recently "Somewhere in England," in which nearly 40,000 troops, including an Armoured Division, were engaged. H.R.H. Prince Olaf of Norway was amongst the interested spectators

AN ESCAPE FROM THE WAR

The Burden of Possessions? The Garden Path Again. And some Words on the Englishman's Traditional Breakfast, and the Fascinating Study of Maps

POSSESSIONS—BRAVE WORDS.—*The Times* recently in a leader had some comforting words to say to us about the loss of all our possessions. After all, what a blessing in disguise! To be relieved in one fell swoop of everything we possess in the way of *lares et penates*, not to say of clothing. How free one feels when one faces the world in a borrowed suit, perhaps with not even a collar stud to call one's own and to anchor one to a smug, static, selfish existence in thrall to ownership! It is the blessed state of Christian when he shed his fardels. Brave words for the times and from *The Times*.

But does Christian shed his nature with his burdens? A collar stud can be replaced with other essentials of decency and civilisation, and I do not deny (for I have long since put it into practice) that it is wise and pleasant to own and carry about no personal trinkets of any value. But with *lares et penates* it may be another story. I agree that it is in the creed of the modern flat-builder and flat-tenant that men and women should live a roving, hotel-like existence with nothing laid up in lavender.

The modern flat allows for a dozen books and one drawerful of "relics"—no more. All else is steel and glass and clean emptiness. It may suit the young. It does not suit middle age. No doubt to be the slave of one's possessions is a foolish business which circumscribes the free and adventurous life. No doubt there are thousands of older folk who in the recent past have lived in thrall to their possessions.

But there have been and remain as many more who have derived from their possessions an innocent and unselfish pleasure which has coloured their lives, as no roving freedom could have done.

Tyrants or Servants?—What of the literary man whose carefully arranged bookshelves have held for him his business stock-in-trade and his sole recreation? The bomb which blows sky-high his library takes from him the very spice of life and the means of livelihood. His reference books, to which he had hourly access, his histories and biographies copiously annotated—are these no loss to him? Shall he henceforth make shift at a public library, or shall he go without? And the man who inherited or acquired by his thrift half a dozen good pictures or some pieces of china or plate which have delighted the eyes of his friends and family—must we assume that he is well rid of a heavy burden and will be all the more free and easy with modern substitutes? The theory raises large and controversial questions, questions of taste and problems of human nature. For men are a part of all that they have seen and learned and practised, and middle age is not elastic as youth is elastic. Nor will printed sermons or spoken precepts change human nature in a day. Centuries of hard experience have failed to make any perceptible progress that way.

Brave words, too easily spoken, most of all to British ears. For in this land pride of ownership is a strong force in social life and political evolution. Which is not to say that Englishmen have not been slaves to their possessions, but to say that where such possessions provide their owners with innocent colour for life and afford unselfish pleasure to even a small circle, no philosophy and no sermonising will alleviate the calamity of their loss, no substitutes can ever avail, and life can never be the same again.

It is not possession, but a sense of the money value of possession which enslaves men. The unhappy slave among possessors is he who "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing." Money may well be a curse and a tyrant; the books a man has bought to read and re-read, the works of art which give him daily æsthetic pleasure can never be tyrants and, lost, represent to him a lasting and irremediable calamity—I will believe much of the idealism promised us in our brave, new, post-war world to come, but never that Englishmen will wholly abandon their pride and pleasure in household gods honourably acquired and unselfishly enjoyed.

They like the Country.—I forget when the "down the garden path" genre of literature first struck shrewd publishers as likely to appeal to the reading public. Probably it was earlier than we commonly suppose. I know very well that the pioneers were a hundred years and more before the Beverley Nichols' et hoc genus of our time. For Col. Byng (Lord Torrington) and Pastor Moritz were doing the same business a hundred and fifty years ago at a time when the "country" was revoltingly unfashionable alike to town dwellers and to the owners of great country estates, who never dreamed of visiting their mouldering manor-houses and palaces.

Be that as it may, there was a great revival in the "discovery" of the country, via a week-end cottage, by Londoners a decade or so ago, and now there are a score of best-sellers by pioneer novelists and journalists who discovered the public appetite for amateur gardening and professional landscape painting.

A REMINDER OF THE PLEASURES OF PEACE-TIME!

Numbers of those who would normally be engaged in such pleasurable tasks as these are now engaged on sterner duties. Nevertheless, in view of the necessities of the moment, shooting is now almost a patriotic duty; and whenever a sufficient number of guns can be mustered pheasants and ducks and hares are being shot throughout the country. This picture was taken at Mr. C. Stewart Richardson's shoot on Lord Rayleigh's estate at Terling, in Essex; the guns in the party are well-known Essex sportsmen, and the bag was exceedingly good for an afternoon's shoot. From left to right above are seen Dr. Gimson, Capt. A. E. Bryce, Mr. C. Stewart Richardson, Mr. F. G Bright, Mr. Frank Goodey and Mr. L. J. Cullen with their bag at the end of the day

I confess to a great distaste for the genre. I do not care for the patronage extended by Cockneys to the sane and wholesome, coloured and full, manner of life which wiser men have enjoyed without boasting and boosting for generations of time.

I am inclined to yawn over the amateur's discoveries that seeds do grow into flowers, that shrubs increase in size, that mushrooms "happen in a night" and are sometimes edible, and that the song of the thrush at dawn is quite attractive. Country folk do not patronise Westminster Abbey or London fogs, if they gape at the Lord Mayor's Show. There should be reciprocity and fifty-fifty between the town and country mice.

But, if these "discovery" books are to be written (and I think they must be as inevitable and as numerous as are farm workers' much needed cottages converted into week-end paradises for Cockneys), let them be written without patronage. Let them be autobiography rather than scientific treatise. Let them tell of a family's adventures in a natural and personal way, with humour at the expense of humanity and not of rusticity.

It is so that Anthony Armstrong (A.A. of *Punch*) puts out his "garden paths," and his latest, *We Like the Country*, inasmuch as it keeps severely away from war and follows the precepts set out above, is refreshing escape literature which I recommend. For Mr. Armstrong writes as a countryman already made, with a humour which is not forced and which has given him his reputation, and with that personal touch which gives purpose and continuity to a difficult literary form.

The Great] Illusion.—Everybody is noticing that the hens ("those distressing bipeds," as *St. Ives* called them) are not playing the patriotic war game and have ca'ed more canny than ever before in the history of poultry and in living memory. A fresh egg this November is worth its weight in copper, and substitutes must be found for the Englishman's traditional breakfast. How many squires and commercial travellers and other robust Britons have declared (up to November, 1940) that they could not possibly face the world of sport and business unfortified at 9 o'clock by "two poached eggs and a rasher." And now that necessity is a luxury for Crœsus. The substitute was found in our parish magazine. The same effect can be simply produced by using one egg instead of twelve eggs for a party of six. You fry your bacon and fry your toast with the bacon fat, and you mix the contents of one egg with two tablespoonfuls of milk and then apply the egg-milk mixture to the toast.

The *effect* is precisely the same as if you had served up scrambled eggs and bacon with pre-war generous hand to each of the party.

In short, that "two eggs minimum" is one more great illusion. It was the *taste* of egg which, endeared to the Briton by long tradition, had fixed in his mind the notion that the labours of a new day were insurmountable unless he were fortified with at least two eggs.

And so the war sweeps away another of our great illusions and great traditions.

Maps.—Apropos to some recent remarks on knowledge and its indestructible properties, I add a note on the science of map-making and on the art of map-reading. Properly expounded, this subject is fascinating to people in all stages of education, and when the principles are acquired and the enormous mass of information which a good ordnance map provides is made clear to the map-reader, he begins to read his map at last with intelligence and finds it an illustrated encyclopædia instead of a dull chart.

Never (I ventured to say) be too proud to acquire knowledge, never be too proud to listen to a lecture on a subject of which you believe you know a good deal.

I have always enjoyed studying my map on long motor journeys when my companion was doing a turn at the wheel. It is fun to get a picture of the country which lies immediately ahead and to "prophesy" just where the open spaces will come, where the steep hills and the hairpin bends, what type of trees the woods will hold, what shape the hills will take and what ancient monuments will be met and of what date, whether the churches will have spires or towers, and so on. All these landscapes are painted on good maps for anyone with an eye to read the conventional signs, and, of course, a military map supplies a perfect treasury of vital military knowledge besides, concealed in little dots and figures and lines which make the whole subject a glorious game and a really exciting detective story.

J. G.

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THE PUBLICAN'S DAUGHTER TURNS BLACKSMITH : Miss Connie Wills of Mealsgate, a Cumberland village near Carlisle, is eighteen years of age. She is a real blacksmith's "striker"; she is also postwoman and barmaid. Miss Wills thinks nothing of delivering a hundred letters, then shoeing a few horses, then serving in her father's inn at night. Her father, landlord of the Apple Tree Inn, has also held a number of jobs at one and the same time—for twenty years he was the village postman, publican and undertaker! Here Connie Wills is seen with her 10 lb. hammer, at work in the smithy with Mr. Johnson, the blacksmith

THE BALLET DANCER TURNS BLACKSMITH : Miss Leonora Hope was formerly a dancer; she is now training as a blacksmith near Birmingham, where this picture was taken. The war has wrought a variety of changes in the lives of women all over the country—but the change from ballet dancer to blacksmith is indeed a far cry

THE STROLLING PLAYER TAKES THE ROAD : Mr. William James Martin has, in his time, appeared in vaudeville and variety. Like many other of "the profession," however, he has been hit hard by the war. He now strolls from town to town through the Kentish countryside, earning a little money here and there in country taverns, and in entertaining evacuees from the bombed areas

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane.

FROM BALLET to BATTLE

Diaghilev, Dictator of Ballet : Two New Travel Books : The Epic of Dunkirk : and a War Thriller

IT might be necessary to be a balletomane to reach the proper degree of excitement at the appearance of the **LIFE OF DIAGHILEV,** by Serge Lifar (Putnam. 21s.), although the emotional disturbance might vary according to the school.

Not being a balletomane, but merely one who in his time has received much pleasure, entertainment and instruction from the ballet, I am under the impression that during the reign of Diaghilev there was only one school which mattered, and that was his. On this point I am prepared to be corrected, but I would like to stick to the word "reign," for Diaghilev in his day was unquestionably the all-highest in the world of ballet.

He was also a considerable and extremely potent force in the field of all the arts. It is impossible to discuss Bakst, Picasso, Stravinsky, de Falla, Marie Laurencin, Gris, Derain, Matisse, Gordon Craig, Prokofiev, Ravel, Debussy, Utrillo, and even the Surrealists without at some time or other the ballet in general and Diaghilev in particular coming into it.

He was a strong man, a critic and a creative impresario. At the turn of the century we find him as a young man editing *The World of Art*—a Russian publication, issued in St. Petersburg, and, in those years, wielding a considerable influence. He was scarcely twenty, but was dictator of its artistic policy; and it is significant that for the heading of his first leading article he borrowed a quotation from Michael Angelo: "He who follows will never lead."

Diaghilev never followed anybody; but during his extraordinary career he succeeded in taking the best out of a collection of temperamental dancers, artists and musicians, and, through his own genius, producing a ballet which attained a degree of performance and excellence which had never before been seen.

The period in which he began his work was peculiarly receptive to his kind of ideas, the basis of which was a revolt against classicism. He was just as vehement in his denunciation of decadence, against which charge he defended all that he found best in modern art. As his biographer says: "Diaghilev instinctively hated everything that was derivative, imitative, *réchauffé* or static, for this was what real decadence represented to him."

M. Lifar has divided this work into two parts. The first is a biography of the man up to the date when M. Lifar first met him. The second half is a more intimate record of the life and work which the author, through his intimacy, shared with Diaghilev. In this process, in spite of the author's declared intention of treating his subject objectively, the man, the legend and the revered and intimate friend are inextricably mixed—so much so that at the end of the book the death and the funeral scenes are treated with a display of emotional pyrotechnics which is calculated to make the average reader a little uncomfortable.

Travel in these days being one of the relaxations, and certainly one of the few excitements, denied to almost all of us, there is some point in a deep armchair, a glowing fire and a good travel book. Moreover, for colour, variation and the certainty of excitement, the Far East is undoubtedly the right half of the right hemisphere.

Mr. Carl Shreve had the travel urge at the right moment, and set off for Japan. In **DISTANT HORIZONS** (Herbert Jenkins. 12s. 6d.) he opens up with his impressions of the people and the scene under the shadow of Fujiyama, and finds also that the Japanese are adepts at the art of intimate hospitality. From there he wanders into Mongolia, where he is quickly introduced to police, to handcuffs, and to dirty prisons. After various adventures with Mongolians and with Russians, he encounters brigands in the Gobi Desert, later wandering into the mysteries and magnificences of Tibet.

So he goes on. Hong Kong, Singapore, Bali (which he calls a siren isle), Bangkok of the "Wonder of Wonders," the elephant trails of Siam, and so on through an almost impenetrable, snake-infested jungle to Burma, and later into India.

Mr. Carl Shreve has, as well as a taste for adventure, a shrewd eye for colour and character, and a lively pen with which to set it all down.

Mr. Alan Villiers sought his adventures in the Red Sea, round the coasts of Arabia, down to Zanzibar and Tanganyika, and went pearling in the Persian Gulf. To do all this he set forth in an Arab *dhow*, which rejoiced in the picturesque name of *The Triumph of Righteousness*. She was a vessel of about 150 tons. "From the low bow the lines of her hull ran in a lovely sweep to her poop, which was roomy and high. . . . Her teak mainmast stood ninety feet above the sea, and her tremendous lateen yard was made of the trunks of three trees, lashed stoutly end to end, with many seizings of canvas-bound rope. She stank abominably of fish oil, as do all *dhows*, but I was used to that by then."

SONS OF SINBAD (Hodder and Stoughton. 20s. net) is Mr. Villiers' account of the round voyage he made in this picturesque craft. There was scarcely a dull moment on that voyage. Almost every day something happened; and it was always something interesting. There were mysterious passengers. There were women carried down below, and cooped up for weeks; and there was the extraordinary life of the shipboard crew.

Mr. Villiers has a curiously reflective style, which intensifies his descriptive matter, and brings his reader into almost personal contact with the unfamiliar scenes and types which he portrays. *Sons of Sinbad* is an unusual travel book—quite absorbing and very well illustrated.

From the contemporary documents and from first-hand sources, Mr. E. Keble Chatterton has compiled **THE EPIC OF DUNKIRK** (Hurst and Blackett. 10s. 6d. net). It is but a few months since the world was thrilled by this great story; and this is the first attempt to deal with it comprehensively.

Mr. Keble Chatterton has never tackled a more enthralling subject; and he tackles it from the right angle—i.e., from its naval and seafaring aspect. The stories of those little boats, of the naval action, to which are added reports from some of the captains themselves are all placed in their true relation to the heroic rearguard action of the Army. It is indeed an epic narrative. No one who has ever dusted about the deeps and shallows of these islands in a small boat, nor even those whose knowledge of the sea is confined to cross-Channel or pleasure steamers, will be able to read unmoved the list of names of those tiny craft which spread over six pages of this record.

From the story of Dunkirk it is but a step to the collapse of France, which, broadly, is the subject of Mr. Francis Beeding's new novel, **ELEVEN WERE BRAVE** (Hodder and Stoughton. 8s. 3d.). This is frankly a thriller.

The tale is told in the first person singular by one John Orford, who was accredited to the British Embassy in Paris on comparatively innocuous routine work, but who, in effect, was a Secret Service agent. The action opens in May of this year, when the Allied Armies were retreating from the Meuse. The French Prime Minister (called for the purposes of this story M. Clementin) was putting up a brave fight for the France he loved, and in whom he believed. Generals were being removed, the Commander-in-Chief had been superseded, but still all was not well. Subtle influences were at work, in which his own mistress, a sinister newspaper proprietor (called in this story Privet), a politician with pro-Axis leanings (also easily recognisable), and an ancient Marshal are involved.

Orford, with his friend and superior officer, Colonel Granby, and with the aid of General Réhmy of the Deuxième Bureau, get to know a great deal about these intrigues.

There are all sorts of adventures, overheard conversations, missing notebooks, a last-minute rescue from a firing squad, third degree examinations and all the rest of it. There is also a thrilling incident in which our hero and the gallant Colonel Granby climb inside a German tank, drive it at a detachment of the advancing enemy, polish them off, and escape. Following that there is a dramatic episode in Paris, already in the occupation of the Germans, who have shot Réhmy and captured Orford.

It is all good honest-to-God thriller stuff, with hardly a trick missing; but at the same time the author so obviously knows his Paris, his France, the living persons who are disguised under his pseudonyms, and indeed the whole tragic story, that the reader is able to enjoy those added thrills.

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Client: In that case, I've found her 'ideal investment.' I suppose your wealthy clients are taking them up in sackfuls?

Stockbroker: They wish they could! Unfortunately, everyone is rationed to a thousand pounds' worth.

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Commission as Acting Pilot Officer or rank of Sergeant is given when you are fully qualified.

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Volunteer now! Write or call:—R.A.F. Section of your nearest Combined Recruiting Centre (address from any Employment Exchange). **Note:** If you are in class **(a)** above, you should *also* notify, in writing, the Employment Exchange at which you registered, that you now wish to serve on Air Crew duties in the R.A.F.

WRITE NOW FOR FREE LEAFLET

To Air Ministry Information Bureau, Srn. 1., Kingsway, London, W.C.2. *Please send me latest leaflet, giving details of Flying Service in the R.A.F.*

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

14.12.40

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF TO-MORROW

While this country makes great efforts to safeguard the children in bombed cities by evacuating them to safe areas, let us give a thought to those poor mites who, through disease and sickness, have to remain in London to brave the fury of Hitler's barbaric air war which he wages with equal intensity against the defenceless and the weak.

One of the great institutions of the Capital is the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, W.C.1. This Hospital has the distinction of having been the first, and for some years the only, Children's Hospital in the United Kingdom.

The outbreak of war did not find the Hospital unprepared. In close co-operation with the Ministry of Health, a well protected department was established capable of dealing with a large number of casualties, and no less than seventy-five beds were reserved for the more serious cases. A further unit of one hundred beds was established in a country institution for the children that it had not been necessary to retain in London.

A few weeks ago this Hospital received a direct hit from a large high-explosive bomb and sustained considerable damage, yet it continues to maintain its tradition of unfailing service in the cause of humanity.

Those readers of THE SPHERE who wish to help in this most critical of all battles—the battle against sickness and disease of the country's future generation—should address their contributions to The Right Honourable Lord Southwood, Chairman of the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London, W.C.1.

CHRISTMAS IN GERMAN PRISON CAMPS

This is the fate of 44,000 officers and men of three Services who are prisoners of war in Germany and who will be very much in our thoughts this Christmas. Special seasonable fare is being provided for all the men—and the British Prisoners of War Fund is sending out Christmas games, amusements and music—so that Christmas can be celebrated in time-honoured fashion by all the men.

Thanks to the British Prisoners of War Books and Games Fund, which has been sending out books, games, sports equipment, etc., every camp has now been able to organise libraries, concerts, and team games.

In addition, the Fund sends individual parcels to the men. An enormous card-index is kept at the London headquarters of the Fund, and on this the tastes of each prisoner are entered. Every type of book is sent—travel, biographies, thrillers, novels—no request is left unanswered, subject only to censorship requirements.

Owing to the enormous number of men taken prisoner, thousands of pounds are urgently needed to

WORTHY CAUSES

Christmas Charity Appeals

tide the Fund over the Christmas and winter period, especially to maintain in full the service of "individual" parcels to the men. Donations, however large or small, are badly needed and should be sent to the founder, Miss Christina Knowles, or the chairman, Sir Hugh Walpole, at 580, Carrington House, London, W.1.

THE SILVER LADY FUND

In spite of the numerous inconveniences which have arisen on account of the war, the Silver Lady is still maintaining all her charitable work among the hungry and homeless. In addition to her usual activities she has established canteens on various parts of the coast for members of his Majesty's forces. These are beneficent causes which are really worthy of recognition, and if you can send a donation to the Silver Lady this Christmas you may be sure that your gift will bring untold relief and delight to many who have little or nothing else in which they can find delight. Please send your gifts to The Silver Lady Fund, 6, Tudor Street, London, E.C.4. Thank you.

THE WAR AND THE WAIFS AND STRAYS SOCIETY

For the first time in its history the Society's family is over the 5,000 mark—at the moment it is 5,004. Many of the children have fathers in one of the Services and practically every day they receive requests for help from men in the forces. The Society has given considerable help also with the removal to safe areas of toddlers under five from the bombed districts of London. Many of them are boarded out and the others are being accommodated in the nineteen special homes opened for the purpose.

Nearly forty of the Society's Homes have had to be evacuated from danger areas, and in every one of the 110 homes in different parts of the country, special arrangements had to be made for protection against air raids. Gifts and donations will be gratefully received by the Secretary, The Waifs and Strays Society, Kennington, S.E.11.

SUCCOURING LONDON'S HOMELESS

Now that war, with all its savagery, has come to London, the missionaries of the London City Mission find themselves in the front line of battle. Many of them reside and work in districts which receive nightly visits from Goering's bombers, and tremendous demands are made upon them by the widespread suffering which they witness.

Their prime purpose is still evangelism. For over a century the Mission has existed to proclaim the Gospel to the multitudes, and war only increases the urgency of that message. A glorious work is proceeding now in the air-raid shelters, where hundreds of people assemble night by night. Hymns are sung, prayer offered, and brief addresses are delivered before the shelterers settle down for the night.

But the plight of the thousands of bombed-out families calls for practical help, which is forthcoming from the Mission's War Relief Fund. Gifts are solicited for the War Relief Fund, that increased aid may be given at Christmas. Clothing is also much in request. Address: Secretary for War Relief, London City Mission, 3, Bridewell Place, E.C.4.

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

Freddie and Tommy are two wee sons of a serving soldier. Their mother was recently killed in an air raid, and the two boys, helpless in their plight, were left unprotected. In Dr. Barnardo's Homes they will find the mother-love that money cannot buy. At the moment, these Homes know of 2,731 of their old boys who are serving in the fighting forces—men who, as children, got a similar chance in life. Will you see what you can do for the 8,250 boys and girls now in these Homes? They include 400 and more children of serving fathers. A special Christmas gift of 10s. will feed one child for ten days, and cheques, etc., should be addressed to 20, Barnardo House, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

THE SALVATION ARMY AND THE "AIR BLITZ"

The past months of intensified air attack on Brit[ain] have reaffirmed the capacity of the Salvat[ion] Army to act as an emergency organisation. The n[ight] of the intensive bombing of Coventry reached [the] rounding districts and within fifteen minutes [the] mobile canteens, manned by Salvationist workers, [were] racing through the darkness and danger to take g[ifts] of hot tea and trays of food to A.R.P. workers, fir[emen] and the tragic homeless. It would be impossi[ble] give details of the emergency work, but it has co[ver]ed such varied matters as the provision of leader[s] escorts for the Children's Overseas Evacuation Sch[eme] the serving of refreshments in large public sh[elters] communal kitchens, supplying of clothes to air[-raid] victims; setting up of homes for old people evac[uated] from London. Gifts to help in the continuance of [this] work will be gratefully received by General Carp[enter] The Salvation Army Headquarters, 101, Q[ueen] Victoria Street, E.C.4.

Don't let them lose their **CHRISTMAS too!**

2,100 CHILDREN RECEIVED SINCE THE WAR BEGAN | 5,400 LITTLE ONES NOW IN OUR CARE.

10/- WILL FEED TWO CHILDREN FOR A WEEK AT CHRISTMAS.

Christmas Gifts gratefully received

WAIFS and STRAYS

SOCIETY,

OLD TOWN HALL, KENNINGTON, S.E.11.

Bankers: Barclays Ltd.

BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR CALLING!

Christmas in Captivity

Thousands of our men will spend this Christmas in German Prison Camps away from their homes and families, and greatly in need of CHEERING UP after long months of captivity. We are sending Christmas parcels to the men and also Christmas games, amusements and music, so that Christmas and the New Year can be celebrated in traditional manner even in the dreary surroundings of the prison camps. PLEASE HELP us to send as many parcels as possible—and also with the vital work of sending books, games, gramophones, and sporting equipment to relieve the appalling monotony and strain the men will have to endure this winter while in enemy hands. Donations, large or small, are most urgently needed and will be gratefully received by

★ **Will YOU adopt a Prisoner?**

Will you help by "adopting" one of more of our men who are Prisoners of War in Germany? For 5s. a month the Fund will keep him supplied with regular parcels of books and games of his own choice, individually addressed, in your name. £1 a month will "adopt" four prisoners. Readers of "The Sphere" will not need to be told what such parcels mean to men in captivity!

SIR HUGH WALPOLE (Chairman) or **MISS CHRISTINE KNOWLES** (Founder and Director)

BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR BOOKS & GAMES FUND

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NOTE: Censorship regulations preclude acceptance of gifts in kind.

The Silver Lady Canteens are helping to feed London's hungry and homeless. We also have Canteens on the Coast for members of H.M. Forces.

Please help by sending a gift of money to:—

MISS BETTY BAXTER, THE SILVER LADY FUND,

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DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

Don't let the war spoil the Children's CHRISTMAS!

8,250

Boys and Girls constantly supported.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

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10/- feeds one child for 10 days at the CHRISTMAS SEASON.

Cheques, etc. (crossed), payable Dr. Barnardo's Homes, should be sent to 20 Barnardo House, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

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Xmas 1940

Christmas symbolises the dawning of Faith. For centuries past, at this period of the year, man has experienced Faith with an exaltation of spirit, with a sublime feeling of good fellowship. The act of giving is the material expression of this goodwill. So let it be this year. . . . But with less to give, be more discerning in your distribution. Think of those to whom Faith means Hope—the patients of The Royal Cancer Hospital, visited with a malignant disease that is among the most dreaded enemies of mankind. Hope in the ultimate release from suffering is the one straw to which they cling. But their Faith in the ability of this great institution to help them is threatened by our lack of adequate funds for equipment and research. We cannot . . . we will not allow them to lose this Faith in us. Will YOU help in this great cause?

The Royal Cancer Hospital
(FREE)

FULHAM ROAD LONDON, S.W.3

Sleep...

WHAT IS SLEEP? For centuries, hundreds of scientists and medical men have investigated the cause of sleep, with the result that many different theories have been put forward.

Some of the more popular ones are :—(1) that sleep is due to an accumulation of fatigue poisons in the blood; (2) that it is brought on by lack of blood in the brain; (3) that it is associated with the secretions of the glands; (4) that it is caused by muscular relaxation.

The fact is that no one has ever established a theory that is completely satisfactory.

What is sleep? Can you cut down your hours of sleep without injury to health? Is day sleep as valuable as night sleep?

These and other questions, of vital interest to us all today, are discussed here.

☆

ALL we know for certain about sleep is that when a person is asleep, his metabolic rate decreases. His blood pressure is lower, his digestive functions are less active, his body temperature falls, he breathes less deeply and more slowly.

That is a description of the body during sleep. A description of the working of the nervous system is less easy.

☆

THE fact, for instance, that a mother can sleep through thunder or the roar of passing trains, but wake at a whimper from her baby, shows that, even during sleep, the mind is wakeful enough to select noises.

Similarly, today, some of us sleep through the noise of bombing and gunfire — and wake when the alarm clock rings!

And we can do this, even though we are sleeping deeply, not shallowly.

☆

AS everyone recognises, there are different "sleep groups" — different depths of rest at which we may sleep. And as we all know from our own experience, the deeper we lie in the ocean of sleep, the more refreshed we are when we "come up." Whereas, if we lie on the surface of sleep, we waken with a sense of having been busy all night, unrefreshed, and less able to cope with life's difficulties.

One fundamental point on which the investigators have agreed is that it is the *quality* of sleep, not the *quantity*, that counts.

Some people look perfectly fresh and feel splendidly fit although their hours of sleep have been reduced. They are the people who get the restful, refreshing kind of sleep — 1st Group Sleep.

It is not known *why* some people get 1st Group Sleep while others don't but, by the empirical method (that is by observation), it is known that after drinking Horlicks people do get 1st Group Sleep. They go to sleep more quickly and sleep deeply, quietly, restfully, so that they waken completely refreshed.

☆

YOU will find that you get that kind of sleep if you take a cup of hot Horlicks last thing at night. Start taking it tonight and see how much better you feel tomorrow all day long. You will find that you are more refreshed after as little as four or five hours' of 1st Group Sleep than after eight hours' shallow, restless sleep.

Night workers, who sleep during the day, will find the same. The investigators have shown that exactly the same body changes take place in the sleeper whether by day or by night. And the same rule applies to day sleepers: It is not the *amount* of sleep that matters but the *kind* of sleep. So take your Horlicks just before turning in and get 1st Group Sleep.

THIS picture was used by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, U.S.A., as a symbol of the comfort that passengers would find in their trains. The people of America took the kitten to their hearts, named her "Chessie," adopted her as a national pet. She's had kittens since!

Famous QUEENS

9th Queen's Royal Lancers

This famous Regiment dates from Queen Anne. Disbanded at the Peace of Utrecht. Restored in 1715 as Wynne's Dragoons. Converted into Light Dragoons in 1783. Equipped as Lancers 1816. The regiment attracted the notice of William IV and Queen Adelaide in 1830 who ordered it to be called the 9th or Queen's Lancers and later the 9th or Queen's Royal Lancers.

HIGHLAND QUEEN

GRAND LIQUEUR SCOTCH WHISKY

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In Quest of Good Hotels

By ASHLEY COURTENAY

FROM conversations and correspondence, it seems that there is quite a large section of the hotel-seeking public who have not attuned themselves to present conditions, and it may be that I shall help to bridge the gulf between the public and the hotel world if I were to disperse some of those ideas which have been brought about as a result of the war.

There is a section of the hotel public who are far too prone to use that ugly word "profiteering" on the slightest provocation. They complain that hotel prices have risen, but if, as in many cases, summer prices still prevail, who can blame the hotel-keeper for taking advantage of an ill wind, and so, for the first time for many years, be able to run his hotel in the winter without loss. Perhaps one of the greatest mistakes of the British hotelier was that, in pre-war days, he had not the courage to close his hotel out of season, but endeavoured to keep open by quoting winter terms which were unprofitable.

It must also be remembered that most hotels in so-called safe areas had no summer season, and with no reserves have now to meet increased costs in the shape of rent, rates, heat, lighting, staff, food—yes, even the soap, notepaper, ink, and everything else which the public get free, and use so freely. And finally, before I dismiss this unreasonable charge of profiteering, I would remind those who are still sceptical that the word "profiteering" is but a wartime relic of 1914-19, and there can be no profiteering in this war without the Government being the sole benefactor.

Then I am a little war-weary with those who live in hotels and expect the same service as in days of peace. Only recently I was the onlooker when a new arrival, perfectly sound in limb and body, rang her bedroom-bell six times within the first hour of her arrival. First she asked for a good supply of hotel notepaper and envelopes (free, of course). Then she rang for the chambermaid to refill her pen. Presently she rang for stamps, later for a time-table, again to ask what time the post went out, and finally for the maid to post her letters. It is such types of people who cannot understand why hotels should have difficulty in retaining staff.

Of recent weeks I have had a number of complaints which have arisen out of evacuation and postal dislocation. Several correspondents have written to ask me why hotels go on advertising when they are already full. The answer is that, unlike a ship, where passengers book for a voyage, visitors at hotels mostly book their accommodation for an indefinite period, and those who come for a night stop on for weeks, and even months, whilst those who have come for the duration may have to change their plans overnight.

The result is, hotels have a constantly floating population, and a wise hotelier advertises regularly to keep a consistent flow of enquiries.

Then, again, I hear grouses from those who have wired reserving accommodation, and arrive on the doorstep to find that there is no room for them. It is unwise in these war days to assume that any accommodation is available, unless it has been definitely confirmed. If, too, hotels seem a little curt in their letters of regret, bear in mind that they are inundated with enquiries, and with short staff it is difficult for them to maintain the personal touch.

One large hotel of my knowledge was getting, six weeks prior to Christmas, thirty enquiries a day respecting Christmas and New Year, all of which had to be refused, because the hotel cannot accept Christmas bookings this year other than from residents.

So embarrassing has the situation become for them that, in order to stem the tide of enquiries, they are spending quite a considerable amount of money each week in informing the public that they are full up.

The hotel-keeper's lot is by no means a happy one. He is not catering for the carefree, happy holiday-maker of peacetime days. The bulk of his clientèle are forced to stay in hotels by the circumstances of war. Here, with enforced idleness, anxiety, and nerves on edge, a natural breeding-ground for grumblers is created. But, fortunately, there is another side of the picture—those who appreciate the fact that, apart from the comparative safety they enjoy, they are relieved from all the worry of wartime housekeeping and that the hotel-keeper *is* doing his best under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

Hotel News.—Saunton Sands Hotel, North Devon, has been requisitioned, as also has Kinmel Hall, Abergele, North Wales. The small Sleepy Hollow Hotel, near Washington, Sussex, has been taken over by Miss Winn. There was at the time of writing, limited accommodation available at the following places: Front House Hotel, Bovey Tracey. A double room for winter residence at Fuidge Manor, Spreyton, Mid-Devon.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

H.-S., Whitecairns.—Safety lies not in distance but in district, and the place you are looking for is The Chequers Hotel, Pulborough, Sussex, where air-raids and aerodromes are unknown. Failing that, Clematis Cottage Hotel, Washington, Sussex, or The Gate House Private Hotel, at Midhurst, Sussex.

E. P. L., "Somewhere at Sea."—My difficulty in advising you is that I do not know from day to day which hotels have vacancies, nor are you able to be sure when you can get your leave, I expect; but here are some suggestions: The Plough, at Cheltenham, would make a good headquarters, because it is not so residential as most hotels, and there is a likelihood that you will get in there if you will book well ahead. Failing that, make a note of the following: The Lamb, Burford; write E. North Lewis. The Threeways Hotel, at Mickleton; write to Miss Simms. The Cotswold Hotel, at Chipping Campden; write J. Hargreaves. The Manor House Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh; write Mr. and Mrs. Duckworth.

Mrs. J., Southsea.—Winchester is badly off for good hotels, and I imagine you will have some difficulty in getting in there, but you might try the following, which are good in their own particular sphere: The Stanmore Hotel (a brewers' hotel), The Carfax Hotel (unlicensed), The Royal Hotel (old-fashioned, but licensed).

Mr. Ashley Courtenay is always pleased to advise "Sphere" readers of hotels, both large and small, known to him personally. Letters, accompanied by a 2½d. stamp for reply, should be addressed to him, c/o the Editor, THE SPHERE, *32-34, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4. Personal and telephone inquiries, however, cannot be accepted.*

THE SHAFTESBURY HOMES AND "ARETHUSA" TRAINING SHIP

THE Committee of this long-established Society are wishing to do all in their power to take into their Homes boys between ages of 5 and 11½ who have lost their parents through enemy action. Applications for admission from any readers of the *Sphere* would receive prompt attention. Please apply in the first instance to General Secretary, 164, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.

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PAIGNTON

Continued on facing page

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